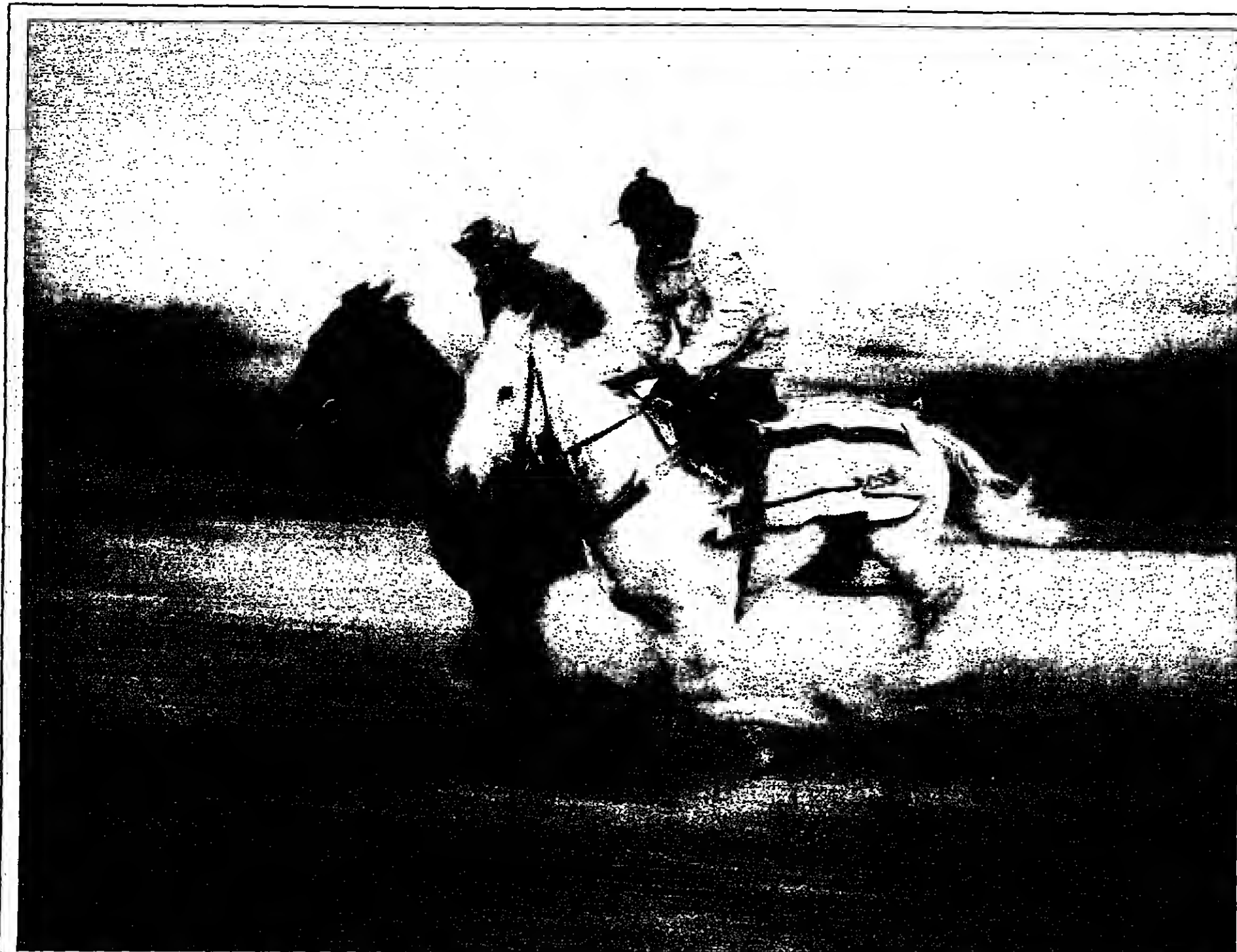




THE INDEPENDENT

Friday 26 December 1997

45p (IR50p) No 3,491



Grey's elegy: One Man, favourite for today's running of the King George VI Chase at Kempton Park, on the gallops at Greystoke, Cumbria; Sport, page 18 Photograph: Brian Harris

Shoppers to pay the price in plans for powerful food-standards agency

Food prices seem set to rise to fund a new agency to be established under government plans to clean up the food industry. Food producers will have to fund some of the agency's costs, with a bill of up to £200m. Our Legal Affairs Correspondent has the details.

Ministers plan to charge manufacturers for food licences to help pay for the Food Standards Agency and the implementation of tougher regulations, according to the White Paper establishing the body, a copy of which has been seen by *The Independent*.

The bill to the food industry could be £200m, which will raise fears that prices could have to rise. It will also raise concern that the industry will expect trade-offs for funding the scheme. The leaked White Paper, due to be published in November but delayed to next

month, also proposes a new advisory committee on animal feed. It is intended to meet concern over the use of genetically altered feed such as maize given to animals and its effects on human health.

The document, marked "final draft", contains wide powers for the agency, including a key role in identifying and recommending balanced and nutritious diets for the general public. Overall, the proposals will create one of the most powerful food watchdogs in Europe. The White Paper is thought to have been delayed after intervention by the Minister without Portfolio, Peter Mandelson, apparently echoing fears by the food industry that emphasis on nutrition would deflect the agency from its other tasks.

The "final draft" says the agency, to be created by 1999, should play a "key role" in developing nutrition policy. In particular, it should help provide the definition of a "healthy diet", and propose laws on

nutritional aspects of food, including "labelling and claims, dietary supplements sold as food, fortified foods and functional foods". Critics are watching to see if the proposals are watered down. The Health Department has lobbied hard to keep control over nutrition policy.

But it is clear the food industry will be dismayed by the plan to charge them for food

the FSA is likely to bring". The best way of achieving this is a "comprehensive system of licensing with charges", it says.

The White Paper makes big claims for the FSA, which will be based in Whitehall and divided into a commission and an executive arm called the agency, modelled on proposals by Professor Philip James in his 8 May report. In his draft preface, the

they are made. It will operate under "guiding principles" including protecting public health in food and the need for unbiased assessments.

A controversial guideline is the requirement that the agency's actions on food health are "proportionate" to the risk and take into account the likely cost to industry and consumers. The Consumers Association believes such "political" judgements should be left just to ministers.

The crucial part of the proposals is the separation of food production issues, which will be retained by the Ministry of Agriculture (MAFF), and food consumer protection, which will pass to the agency. The two were seen as conflicting interests, a factor exposed in recent food crises such as the salmonella eggs scare and BSE.

The agency, whose annual expenditure will be more than £100m, will take over the role of advising ministers on policy and the need for new laws in areas such as food safety, food standards and public information and education on food-related matters.

A Health Department source said there have been battles in MAFF over which powers it will retain. The agency will be given the power to intervene legally - under existing or new powers in the 1990 Food Safety Act - in farming practices where these affect food safety. This will ensure it can operate across the whole food chain, from "plough to plate", says the White Paper.

Critics will doubt whether the agency will be given the resources and have the motivation to intervene effectively in what will remain MAFF's main area of responsibility. The agency, which will have the power and funds to commission research, will also have a "major strategic role" in developing a national strategy on the control of animal pathogens - which can cause disease in humans - in the food chain.

The Consumers Association said it broadly backed plans for the FSA, but was concerned about industry funding it.

EXCLUSIVE BY MICHAEL STREETER

licences to fund many of the White Paper's objectives. In a key passage, the document says "... the Government believes the food industry should bear the bulk of the costs of improving food safety and standards. The food industry as a whole will benefit from the improved public confidence in food safety and standards that

Prime Minister says the plans will "transform" the way food-standard issues are handled, and promises to do away with the "old climate of secrecy and suspicion".

A key part of the paper allows the agency, which will be responsible to the Department of Health, to publish not just its decisions but evidence on why

A good year...

The Independent's top writers on the moments that made 1997: with Andrew Marr, Donald Macintyre, Suzanne Moore, Polly Toynbee, David Aaronovitch, Robert Fisk

PAGES 5-13



Just what you need for a Christmas break: Mediterranean sunshine.

There you are, feeling anything but Christmassy. Rain lashing down. Wind howling. Snow forecast. Then a friend hands you a glass of wine that shimmers in the firelight like sun on the water at St Tropez. James Herrick Chardonnay may not sound Mediterranean but as you raise the glass there's a rush of citrus and spice like the Mistral in your face. Then follows a flavour-tour of the South of France - wild thyme, vanilla, cloves, gooseberry, lemon, lime - till you can feel the warmth on your back and the blue Mediterranean between your toes. Stay awhile. Have another glass.



James Herrick CHARDONNAY THE PICK OF THE SOUTH OF FRANCE AVAILABLE COUNTRY WIDE FROM SUPERMARKETS, SPECIALIST CHAINS AND MAJOR INDEPENDENT WINE MERCHANTS

TODAY'S NEWS

Queen breaks tradition with personal message

The Queen broke with the tradition of her Christmas broadcast with a relaxed and surprisingly personal message to the nation. She paid homage to Diana, Princess of Wales, and there was prolonged footage of the public grief which followed the Princess's death and the funeral. Quoting William Blake about how the "silken twine" of joy which can accompany woe, she also described the happiness surrounding her 50th wedding anniversary celebrations. Page 3

Woody Allen on honeymoon

Woody Allen is spending Christmas on honeymoon with his new bride in Paris. Yesterday he posed for pictures with Soon-Yi Previn, the adopted daughter of his former partner Mia Farrow. Although his liaison with Soon-Yi had come in for some strong criticism in the US, he has received a comparatively sympathetic reception in France. Page 4



Gales lash Britain

The country was hit by storms of up to 90 miles per hour yesterday. Three people were killed and tens of thousands had to endure Christmas Day without electricity, or heating. Weather forecast, page 2

The Eye, page 12
Page 28 and The Eye, page 9
The Eye, page 10
Web address: <http://www.independent.co.uk>



Cold comfort Britain as gales cut power

Tens of thousands of people endured a Christmas without electricity after gale-force winds lashed the country, bringing down power lines. As Kathy Marks reports, engineers battled against time to restore supplies before storms struck again.

For householders dependent on electricity, it was a truly miserable day. No heating, no lights, no television, and no way of cooking the Christmas turkey. North Wales, north-west England and Ireland took the worst hattering from winds which gusted to 90mph, leaving a trail of devastation. Three people died in the storms, which swept in from the Atlantic late on Christmas Eve, ripping tiles from roofs and causing havoc on the roads.

The electricity companies called in all their emergency

staff, but more than 20,000 homes remained blacked out yesterday afternoon. Scores of roads and railway lines around the country were blocked by fallen trees and chunks of masonry. As clean-up operations began in the North, high winds moved into southern and western England.

During the overnight storms, police in Merseyside received thousands of emergency calls and one council on the Wirral peninsula, where falling trees caused two serious road accidents, declared a local emergency.

In one accident, a 33-year-old woman from Stoke-on-Trent, who was visiting friends in the Wirral, was killed when a tree crushed her car. Another woman died and her passenger was injured in a collision with another vehicle in the Penny Lane area of Liverpool. In the Irish Republic, a man died and his brother was injured in County Kerry when a wall collapsed, trapping them under rubble.

On the M53 motorway in the Wirral, an ambulance carrying

a kidney to hospital for a transplant was involved in a 10-vehicle pile-up after a tree fell on to the carriageway. Four people were injured. Inspector Colin Davidson, of Merseyside Police, said it was "like the Wild West" in the area at the height of the storm.

Hundreds of trees and lamp-posts were flattened across Wales, Lancashire, Cumbria, Derbyshire and County Durham. The old Severn bridge at Avonmouth was closed, as was the QEII bridge near Dartford, which links Kent and Essex. Part of the A66 was shut after two lorries were overturned by the winds.

In Nottinghamshire, 30 families were moved from their homes after a boilerhouse chimney began leaning in 70mph gusts. In Cardiff, a man died after climbing on to a bridge and falling into the River Taff.

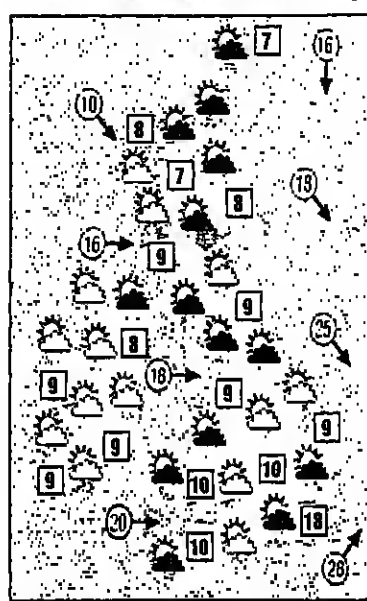
Some 120,000 homes were blacked out in the Irish Republic, where residents also had to contend with the loss of cable television.



Winter fuel: Five-year-old Gemma Hurrell clings to a hot water bottle during Christmas morning service at St John the Baptist church in Hoxton, east London, where churchgoers are being provided with the winter warmers until a new central heating system is installed. Photograph: Rui Xavier

WEATHER

The British Isles, noon today

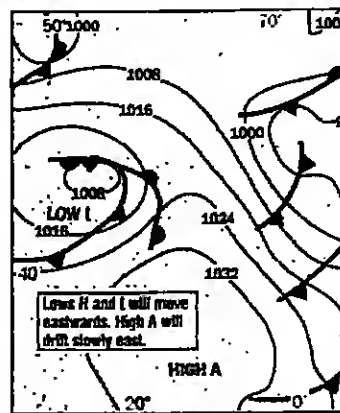


Most recent available figure at noon local time. C: cloudy; H: hot; L: light; M: mist; S: snow; S: sunny; B: thunder.

Aberdeen	C 5 41	Cardiff	R 12 54	Exeter	C 7 45	Glasgow	R 12 54	Guernsey	R 12 54
Anglesey	R 11 52	Carlisle	C 9 48	Edinburgh	R 13 55	Essex	C 7 45	Isle of Man	R 12 54
Ayr	C 9 48	Cork	F 9 48	Leeds	C 7 45	London	C 7 45	Jersey	R 12 54
Belfast	R 9 48	Dover	R 12 54	Liverpool	R 13 55	Manchester	R 12 54	Nottingham	R 9 48
Birmingham	R 13 55	Dublin	C 7 45	Reading	C 7 45	Sheffield	R 12 54	Torquay	R 9 48
Blackpool	R 9 48	Edinburgh	R 13 55	Southampton	R 13 55	St Andrews	R 7 45	Torquay	R 9 48
Bournemouth	R 13 54	Exeter	C 7 45	Stirling	R 12 54	Stirling	R 12 54	Torquay	R 9 48
Brighton	R 13 54	Glasgow	R 12 54	Stirling	R 12 54	Stirling	R 12 54	Torquay	R 9 48
Bristol	R 12 54	Guernsey	R 12 54	Stirling	R 12 54	Stirling	R 12 54	Torquay	R 9 48

General summary and outlook
England and Wales will have a colder but brighter day with rain soon clearing the east to leave sunny spells and showers. The worst of the showers will be in the north and west with the best of the sunny periods in the south and east during the afternoon. Northern Ireland and western Scotland will be chilly and breezy with sunny intervals and sudden heavy showers, which will turn wintry on the hills. Eastern Scotland may start dull and damp but it should brighten up later with just the odd shower. Saturday will start off chilly everywhere and it will feel quite cool. However, strong winds will continue to decrease. In the south and east some places will escape with a dry day and some reasonably long spells of sunshine but there will be further showers in the north and west, some of them quite heavy. On Sunday most areas will be dry for a while but more rain will start to move in from the south-west later as the wind increases. Monday will be wet with some heavy rain.

Atlantic chart, noon today



World weather most recent available figure at noon local time

Athens	S 14 57	Florence	S 10 50	New York	C 4 39
Auckland	F 25 77	Frankfurt	C 8 46	Nice	F 13 55
B. Aires	F 24 75	Geneva	C 8 46	Nicosia	F 17 67
Bangkok	C 33 91	Gibraltar	F 16 61	Paris	C 13 55
Barcelona	C 13 55	Helsinki	C 3 27	Prague	C 4 39
Belm	F 18 64	Hong Kong	C 18 64	Riyadh	C 2 13
Belgrade	C 4 41	Istanbul	C 9 48	Rome	C 13 55
Berlin	C 4 41	Jakarta	F 19 46	Stockholm	C 13 55
Bombay	S 29 84	Jerusalem	R 14 57	Sydney	F 24 76
Brussels	C 13 55	Laos	F 17 63	Tenerife	C 4 39
Budapest	S 4 41	Lisbon	F 11 52	Yokohama	C 4 39
Calcutta	S 29 84	Los Angeles	S 16 61		
Cape Town	F 18 64	Madrid	C 13 55		
Casablanca	F 18 64	Manila	C 13 55		
Christchurch	C 13 55	Melbourne	C 13 55		
Copenhagen	C 13 55	Moscow	C 13 55		
Cairo	F 18 64	Mumbai	C 13 55		
Dakar	F 18 64	Perth	C 13 55		
Dhaka	F 18 64	Port of Spain	C 13 55		
Dubai	F 18 64	San Francisco	C 13 55		
Durham	F 18 64	Singapore	C 13 55		
		Sofia	C 13 55		
		Tokyo	C 13 55		
		Zurich	C 13 55		

AA Roadwatch

London A1 between Watford Way, Mill Hill Circus and Finsbury Circus. Carriageway reduced to two lanes for long term roadworks. Until 31st May 1998.
West Yorkshire M1 J43-J42 Sturton to Louth (M62). A carriageway and a 50mph speed limit are in place. Until 13th July 1998.
Somerset M5 J22-J23 Highbrook to Bridgwater. Major roadworks due to bridge repairs. A 3 mile carriageway is in place. Until 31st March 1998.
West Midlands M6 J6 Birmingham. Long-term roadworks. Northbound entry slip to the M6 North closed at Salford Circus. Overruns in place.
West Yorkshire M1 J43-J42 Sturton to Louth (M62). Carriageway and speed limit are in place. Until Jan 21 1998.
Greater Manchester A56, Old Trafford. Roadworks. Until 19th January 1998.
London A321, Blackheath Underpass. Carriageway. Until 15th April 1998.
Bristol M5 J18-19 Compton Bridge in operation across the Avon. Bridge with a 50mph speed limit. Regular north-hour delays. Until 1st January 1999.
Kent M2 J1 Rochester. Roadworks with various lane closures. Until January 1999.
Kent M2 J5-7 Sittingbourne to Brighthelm. Lane closures. Until March 1998.

Icy ordeal for British officers

Three British Merchant Marine officers were safe after falling overboard into freezing waters in New York's Hudson River after a safety exercise went wrong. The men, with three Indonesian crew-members, were on a lifeboat on board the cruise ship *Edinburgh Castle* when it fell overboard. — Kim Sengupta

Women in financial control

The notion that men wear the financial trousers has been undermined by a new survey by Cornhill Life. Just 14 per cent of women left decisions about savings schemes to their male partners, while 40 per cent said they made the decisions themselves without any consultation. However, the majority of women complained of insufficient information aimed at them. — Kim Sengupta

Road-rage victim seriously ill

A woman, 20, was in a critical condition in hospital with head injuries after an alleged road-rage attack in Pembroke on Christmas Eve. Police were questioning three men. — Kim Sengupta

Chris Evans has a £100 lie-in

Chris Evans, the disc-jockey and new head of Virgin Radio, failed to turn up for a live interview on Sky News yesterday morning, and lost a £100 bet. Evans recently bought a controlling interest in the station from Richard Branson for £80m. — Kim Sengupta

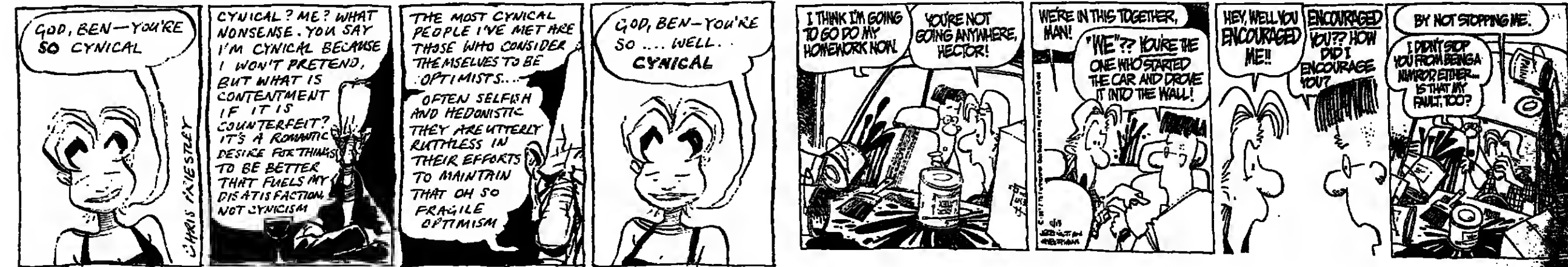
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7.30 FOR 8

by Chris Priestley ZITS

by Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

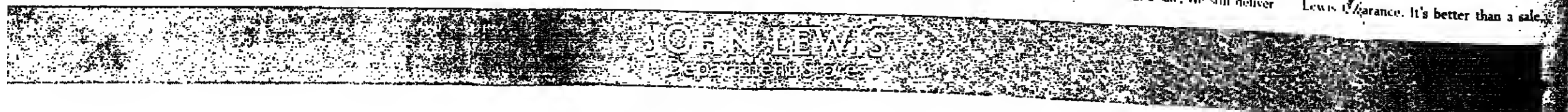


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Queen breaks

For the Queen, it has been a year of grief and great happiness, the role of the nation yesterday in her Christmas Day message. Kathy Marks says the intensely personal tone of the broadcast marked a significant break with tradition.

The Queen's Christmas message, which was broadcast on television and radio, was a deeply personal one. It was a message of hope and faith, and it was a message that resonated with the nation. The Queen's message was a message of love and compassion, and it was a message that was heard by millions of people. The Queen's message was a message that was heard by the nation, and it was a message that was heard by the world.

Cubans have Christmas

Christmas came to Cuba yesterday for the first time in decades. Cubans were given the opportunity to celebrate the holiday with their families and friends. The celebration was a joyous one, and it was a celebration that was shared by the entire nation. The celebration was a celebration of life and love, and it was a celebration that was shared by the entire nation.

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WEATHER

The British Isles, noon today

General summary and outlook

Atlantic chart, noon today

World weather most recent available figure at noon local time

AA Roadwatch

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صفا من الامل

THE INDEPENDENT MOMENTS THAT MADE THE YEAR

FRIDAY 26 DECEMBER 1997

A nation at ease with itself? We're getting there

It has been a good year. Good for Britain and good for most of the world. News is mostly led by bad news. Looking back at *The Independent* during 1997, one finds the whole gamut of human folly and wickedness, in daily instalments: rapes, murders, callous bureaucracy, brutal little wars, child abuse, corruption.

But actually, away from the headlines, the underlying themes we reported and discussed are, when swallowed in retrospective gulps, cheering and positive ones.

Remember, first, that the vast bulk of what mattered in the past 12 months happened privately, in families and companies. We continued to become a richer, better-informed and more secure people. Fine theatre, excellent music, daring fashion and innovative art bubbled up all round the country. Our cities pulsed with energy and self-confidence. Britain became a more cosmopolitan, admired and zipper nation than before. Despite close calls and dark predictions, Northern Ireland continued mostly peaceful.

A cloud over the year, rather bigger than a man's hand, has been global warming and the fears of the effects of climate change. Month after month of weird weather helped keep every thinking citizen at least mildly worried. Around the world, floods, earthquakes, storms and droughts seemed to be more frequent than before. At home, water shortages and changes to our flora and fauna were widely muttered about. At least, although it was a muddled compromise at best, the Kyoto summit saw the beginnings of a world deal. But this is one story that is not going away.

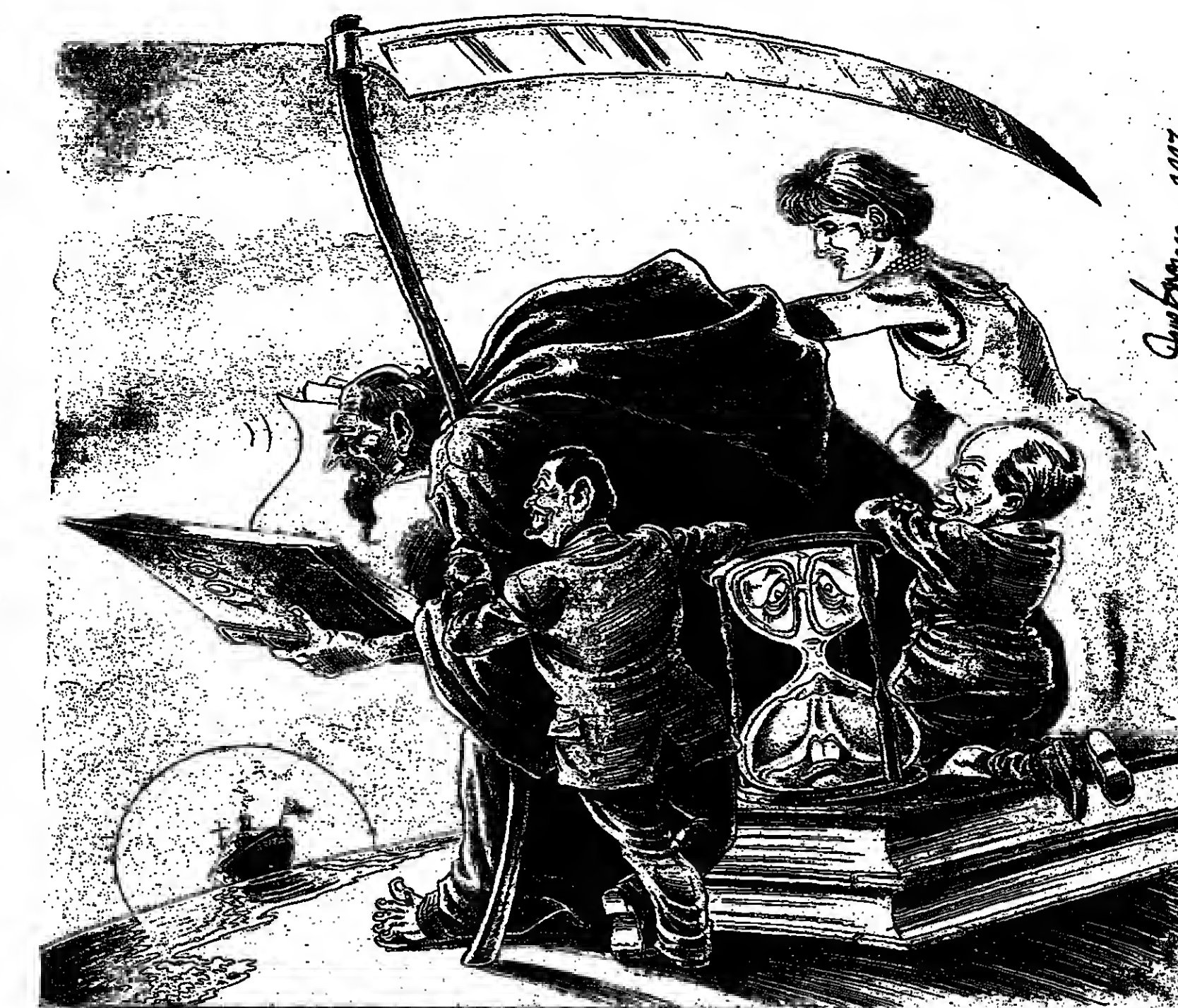
Economically, around the globe, stock markets fell as well as rose. Japan has had a tough year and cannot look forward to 1998 with great bullishness. Korea is in really deep trouble. But overall, trade grew and scores of countries raised themselves another notch from Third-World poverty to First-World affluence.

There were still some brutes and maniacs in charge of individual nations, such as Iraq and Serbia; but less of the world was under brutish or maniacal control in 1997 than in any previous year of world history. Algeria had a year of special horror. From Africa to Russia, there are many examples of misgovernment, corruption and economic foolishness. But more of the world is freer and better-run than before; and some important countries, such as Iran, are slowly rejecting the rest of the world.

Here in Britain, as in other developed countries, we were embroiled in no conflict and became richer. There were the gold-rush stories from the City to the privatised company boardrooms. But leaving them aside, wages rose; unemployment fell; banks and building societies cascaded windfall payments; most house prices rose; and we enjoyed low-inflationary growth. There were fewer coalminers, yes, but many more computer programmers.

Next year will probably be a bit tougher, but a soft economic landing seems likelier than a hard one. The strong pound, which made many people's foreign holidays easier than they would otherwise have been, has produced some export problems, but not of the scale predicted at the time.

As consumers, this was the year many of us bought PCs and joined the Internet.



BY ANDREW MARR

For huge numbers of people, neither money nor drugs nor dealers, it was also the year when carrying a mobile phone became a habit, became normal. In the year ahead, and the one after that, our televisions will change dramatically, so that we have huge numbers of channels. Digital radio will become a ubiquitous, user-friendly joy. The Net will become much easier to use.

But we have grown richer not just in money or gadgets, but in information. If you could be bothered to, in 1997, you learnt a vast amount of new things about the world and the universe. Images flashing back from the beginning of time; a more sophisticated understanding of the relations between genes and human behaviour; warnings about the asteroid threat and the difficulties of working in space; new information about early man; fresh insights into the effects of the oceans on the climate... few weeks passed this year when there was not important

and interesting information to record. These are things we have reported and discussed, but often on inside pages, in the business section and in supplements. I've tried to bring more of the warp and weft of daily life into the news pages of the paper. I hope this helps explain why.

The other big non-political event that touched the country was the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, in a car crash. It was, of course, a ghastly event, particularly for her children, family and many friends, as well as the millions who worshipped her. In an almost religious fashion, from afar, but in the effect of the mourning on the nation's psyche was enlightening and beneficial.

It was a time of national catharsis, when we looked at one another anew and recognised just how much we had changed.

Who is that "we"? The country, after all, was divided. Not everyone was weeping or lighting candles or strewing flowers on the streets of London. Some found the whole thing distasteful and mawkish. But the modes of expression of public grief, emotional, gestural, unashamed, revealed a country much less buttoned-up, formal and reserved than its international image. We are not the country we thought we were. It is almost as if the younger British, in particular, are now "in touch with their emotions", to use the language of pop-

psychology. The funeral and the days leading up to it were intense. After them, there was a dramatic drop in the number of people seeking psychiatric help, perhaps because they were calmed and cheered by being part of something bigger than themselves. The aftermath of Diana's death was not all backward-looking sorrow; it had elements of renewal too.

What, though, of the more predictable news agenda, in particular the political scene? Again, the message of 1997 has been mostly good. The revolution in British politics can be overstated.

We have exchanged one decent, liberal-minded prime minister who was struggling with big questions of reform, for another. Tony Blair's problems in trying to reform welfare and keeping up with the rest of the European Union without entering the first phase of monetary union are just the same as John Major. On a smaller scale, he finds

himself attacked by the press over ministerial behaviour and by farmers over the continuing beef crisis, just as his predecessor was. The two men are not so ideologically distinct as either would wish us to think. Perhaps Mr Blair is a little more enthusiastic about the Thatcher legacy - certainly, she admires him.

The great difference, and good news for Britain, is that Mr Major commanded an exhausted, divided party which was weak in parliament and running out of time, while Mr Blair has a huge majority, a phalanx of energetic and talented ministers and (by the standards of politics) all the time in the world. He has the support of most of the press. The public finances are relatively strong, and strengthening.

All of this is good news simply because it means he has a far better chance of achieving the necessary modernisation than Mr Major ever did.

Some of that modernisation would be anathema to almost any Tory, of course: the constitutional changes - from the steps towards devolution to a serious national debate on voting reform, to the proposed abolition of hereditary peers as political players - are all long-overdue. The seven Blairite months of 1997 did not give us the impression of a government of passionate or particularly well-organised political reformers but still, they have done more reform work already than any other administration since the war. But there will be much more in the year ahead - the detailed legislation setting up the Scottish and Welsh assemblies, and the great debate about London's elected mayor.

What about reform of the welfare state? The cuts to single-parent benefit and possible cuts in disability payments have already caused Mr Blair his hardest moments since taking office.

But no one doubts his iron will on the overhauling issue now. In a preview of 1998 recently published by the *Economist*, Chris Patten, one of the Tories' lost leaders, reflected that "Sooner or later, governments will have to make hard choices. When Britain's Labour government, like other centre-left governments, declines to do so, Mr Hague's Tories must have something coherent to say." He was barely in print before he was out of date.

The new government has been less adept at beginning the national debate about welfare reform, and choosing its targets, than you might have expected. At worst, it has seemed harsh. In other areas, it has not yet demonstrated that it can deliver on educational reform, or is wise in picking its friends. But by any standards, it has made a cracking start, perhaps the most exhilaratingly fast-paced political debut from any administration this century.

Adm that's good too. Isn't it? Sometimes it seems that we are a cynical, grumpy nation, loathing our world decline and terminally nostalgic. But looking back at 1997, there is really no excuse for being a whingeing Brit. Overall, this has been a year of very good omens at home and abroad.

At *The Independent*, we have enjoyed ourselves reporting and arguing about them; and we hope you have enjoyed the paper; and we wish you, our readers, a lively, enlightening and lucky year ahead.

Earthquake in Enfield: the night Middle England turned red

No other election, in recent memory, has so quickly spawned its own folklore. *Where you still up for Portillo?* demanded the title of one book. To miss the defining moment when the then defence secretary knew he had been rejected by the electors of Enfield North was to be left woefully out of a rare collective experience, like failing to see a winning goal at a FA Cup Final, only much, much worse. Portillo made an unusually graceful speech after the count. But that wasn't the point.

His defeat at super-Thy Enfield North - even for those not gleefully celebrating his demise as a Thatcher heir-apparent - dramatised, as no other result could have done, a landslide on a scale unimaginable when the polls had closed a few hours earlier. It was a few minutes after the Enfield count that, flushed with excitement and scarcely able to absorb the seismic nature of the results across the country, the Blairite intellectual Geoff Mulgan, now on the Downing Street staff, could think of only three words to stammer as he left a BBC party: "This is weird."

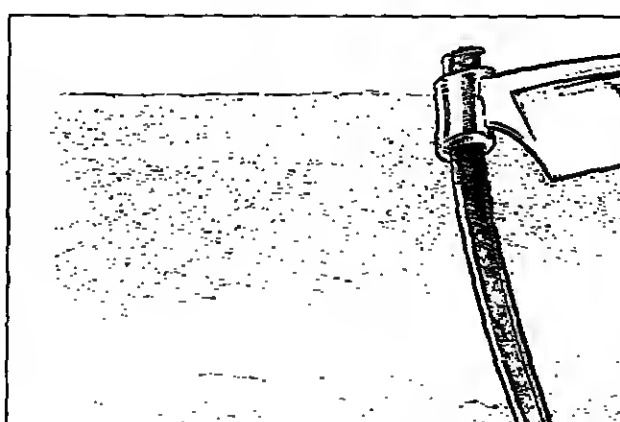
He was massively understating the case. The scale of the victory was all the more mysterious because it had, in the end, nothing to do with the previous month's frantic campaigning. The widespread perception among commentators that Labour had fought a brilliantly successful election campaign was shared by the voting public. Thirty-six per cent of voters thought that Labour had fought the most effective campaign, compared with only 11 per cent for the Conservatives, and 13 per cent for the Liberal Democrats. Judged by measurable results this was nonsense. The most striking effect of four weeks of intense electoral activity was precisely the opposite: an actual reduction in Labour's poll lead over the Tories from an impossible 25 points to a still scarcely credible 13.

The roots of those results on that extraordinary night went much, much further back than the campaign itself. Dick Crossman remarked a generation ago that "an election is the end of a long process". The implosion of British Conservatism isn't easy to summarise. The

ERM catastrophe had inflicted irreparable damage on the credibility of the John Major government, as the 1997 devaluation had on Wilson's. Privatisation had proved an incontestable success in making efficient the lumbering state industries it replaced. But it also created a hugely enriched super-class, which the public was far less ready to accept.

The electorate wasn't, in the end, prepared to give the credit for an economic recovery to a government which had refused to take the blame for a recession. It was unforgiving about sleaze (drawing an infinitely more sophisticated distinction than the tabloid press had done between financial misdemeanours and sexual heterodoxy). And above all it was repelled by a party ideologically at war with itself, especially on Europe.

But it was still an election won as well as lost. As David Butler and Denis Kavanagh summarised this epochal event in the closing words of their authoritative Nuffield College Study: "The Conservatives, 18 years in power, provided the opportunity. Labour seized it."



BLAIR'S VICTORY
BY DONALD MACINTYRE

That Labour was able to do so was Blair's supreme achievement in opposition. While Neil Kinnock had heroically eliminated the poisonous legacy of the early-Eighties, unscrambling the electorally hopeless positions on Europe, defence and internal democracy, and re-

stored to Labour some of the respectability it had enjoyed in the Seventies, Blair had gone much further. Certainly, Blair was an exceptionally attractive leader. But the party he brought to the election was also transformed: unashamedly embracing Margaret Thatcher's restructuring

of the economy. It offered an ideological third way which would seek to heal the social divisions which that restructuring had brought in its wake. Neither old left, went the mantra, nor new right. No longer prepared to tax in order to spend, it also, for the first time in the party's history, promised less than it intended to deliver. And the electorate responded to Blair as it had to Thatcher in 1979, only more so.

The one party that can have truly been said to have benefited from the election campaign itself was the Liberal Democrat Party, which saw its vote share rise to 17 from 13 per cent. One of the peculiar features of the 1997 electorate was its ruthless use of tactical voting. As a result, the Liberal Democrats beat the system they had so long wanted to reform. The third party, with 46 seats, more than in any election since 1929, benefited to an extraordinary degree from the willingness of electors to vote indiscriminately for the anti-Tory candidate. And so did Labour, maybe Blair did "only" secure 44.6 per cent of the vote - more than in

any election since 1970, though lower than any between 1945 and 1966. But the total anti-Tory vote of 61.6 per cent blasted all previous 20th-century records.

The scale of this defeat brought in its wake potential problems as well as untold advantages for Labour. Vigorous opposition and narrow majorities can be tough disciplinarians. The fact that Blair is confronting neither may have played a modest part in the revolt this month over the badly-managed cuts in lone-parent benefit. But those cuts are a harbinger for perhaps his toughest task. Welfare reform, while explicitly foreshadowed in the manifesto, was least discussed in detail before or during the election. Which is one reason why, as shown by the David Blunkett letter leaked last weekend, Cabinet ministers are agonising about some of it now. The ending of free university tuition - a hard choice managed with outstanding skill by that same David Blunkett - and the switch from legal aid to no-win no-fee lawyers' services, are both aspects of welfare reform. But it also means a more

far-reaching attempt than the Tories would have dared, to end the dependency culture and replace it with one of work; to lift the aspirations of those trapped in cut-off, no-hope estates, to target benefits to those who need them and reduce them for those who don't; and in the process find more money for education and health. Blair shows no sign of being diverted from this task; those who try to thwart him from the backbenches may have to face the consequences.

And he has the room to drive through the most ambitious programme of constitutional reform this century: to take just one example, the reform of the Lords which ran into the ground in the Sixties, is now, if not easy, attainable. On education and health, on youth justice, on the minimum wage, he has already begun to redeem his promises. But winning as new Labour means governing as new Labour. The one heresy he will never accept is the one that says since he won so massively it wasn't therefore necessary to transform the party as far as he did.

MOMENTS THAT MADE THE YEAR

Don't be scared of the nanny instinct; it means well

Has this year seen the dawn of a frightening new puritanism? If the Tories weren't dead in the water, drowned rats that have lost the will to swim, they could now be launching a good new line of attack on Labour. They would stride out bearing libertarian banners, commanding that infinitely versatile word "freedom". It might prise open a promising new vulnerable point on one of Labour's flanks.

This is how the Tory offensive would look: within months of coming into office, the Government has set about hanning, stopping and disapproving of things. It is invading the citizen's private space, making bossy decisions on our behalf, officiously telling people what to do.

With subtle hints, the Tories could suggest this is a lingering hangover from the Communist command-economy mentality, an inevitable residue of years of socialism. Get the State Out of Our Hair! William Hague might proclaim (if he had any).

Beef is the most recent libertarian beef. How dare the Government ban beef on the

THE NEW PURITANISM BY POLLY TOYNBEE

bone because of a one in 600 million risk? I find the right's obsession with beef-eating fascinating. Personally, I couldn't care less if I never ate a rib of beef again. There's plenty of other meat to be had. But beef symbolism – all red-blooded Bluff King Hal, Old England, Hearts of Oak – seems to strike some raw nerves (or ganglions) with them.

Did the Government have to do it? Yes. The Tories fudged and avoided taking strong enough action at the start of the BSE crisis and made things infinitely worse. It may be an absurdly small risk, but Governments can't play around with public confidence in food, or importers' confidence in British products. It may be medically unnecessary but it was politically essential – and had

nothing to do with over-protective nannyish sentiments.

However, once the Nanny State hounds are in full cry, all kinds of other oddments of stories flare up to join the general hullabaloo. The housing minister is so PC he is banning doorsteps because the disabled can't get up them in their wheelchairs. Mad? Scary?

Will teams of local government commissars come round and condemn your doorstep? No, it's a perfectly sensible policy for new housing, based on pilot schemes, showing how all new houses should be made easily adaptable for a lifetime – so as people get older they don't need to move. It stops the wasteful putting in and taking out of devices according to who is living in a house at the time. Boring, I know, but hard-



Foxhunters hounded: The Government will find it increasingly difficult to ban hunting with hounds on moral grounds

Photograph: Nicola Kurcz

ly worth a bue and cry. True, the idea of putting a warning at the top of racing-car video games telling people not to drive like that themselves is daft – a "Don't Try This At Home, Kids!" for adults. Silly, maybe,

like many silly warnings issued by the last government ("Warning. This Drink is Hot!" – on hot-drink containers) but hardly a curtailment of our freedom.

Nor is our freedom threatened one iota by forbidding us to look at tobacco advertising. The tobacco industry would not spend billions on promotion if it didn't boost its sales. Most smokers (like me) desperately want to stop and no one wants their children to start, so the only

freedom curtailed is the tobacco industry's avaricious desire to kill us all. The only serious freedom issue at the moment seems to me to be fox-hunting, where many people's immense, if bizarre, pleasure is about to be abolished by the tyranny of a sentimental majority.

However, the Government still has time to wriggle out of this one, and it should.

Eaters of battery chickens or farmed salmon are more cruel to animals over their whole lifetimes than fox-hunters ending a free animal's life in a brief, brutish manner. There is no good objective reason for banning it – and if it were a working-class habit, no one would lay a finger on it.

However, if it is hunted down by a rampant Commons, it will not be because the Government willed it out of any nannyish instincts, but because it was too cowardly to protect an unpopular minority in the face of a stampeding majority.

Is this government really becoming the nanny from hell? I see very little sign of it in its policies. However, there is a new puritanism in its style.

Ministers conduct themselves in sober, rather dull ways. You don't feel they are much fun, or that they have much fun – except maybe Peter Mandelson, who has an unlikely, louché set of friends of a very different Tory and Goldsmithian lavish entertaining kind. Or Robin Cook with his horse-racing.

They are a lot more puritanical than the last Labour government. Many Wilson ministers lived a high old life, some of them pretty rich, very unlike Blair's family-centred, clean-living, down-home types.

Who gives dinner parties like Tony Crosland used to, or great soirées like Harold Lever? And the new puritanical style is more than skin-deep. It's curious that New Labour ministers cannot possibly send their children to private schools, nor even grammar schools, nor use private health, while Wilson's old Labour cabinet was full of ministers with children at Westminster or St Paul's.

Harold Lever, a Manchester millionaire, a key Wilson economic minister, was never subjected to scrutiny of his business affairs as Geoffrey Robinson has been.

It's partly that the post Murdoch-era press has become so

much nastier and less tolerant. The right-wing press yearns for any sign of hypocrisy or champagne socialism among Labour ministers – so although the Blairs could afford to drink champagne for breakfast, lunch and tea, they preserve their image as homey, churchy people.

How long before Mandelson has to sew M & S labels into his Armani clothes to show this interestingly extraordinary man is just a regular guy? Ironically, the champagne did flow freely in the old days when Labour ministers really did think of themselves as socialists. However, that's all a matter of style, taste and image, not of important substance. When it comes to sinister puritanism, the family values fias-

'Who gives dinner parties like Tony Crosland used to, or great soirées like Harold Lever?'

co that sank John Major's crew was a good lesson, well-learned by Labour.

When Robin Cook was caught out having an affair and then left his wife, it was a one-day ripple without the values resonance that would have made the story run and run had he been a Tory.

That is reassuring. Labour may like a scrubbed-family image, but they have had no truck so far with the kind of family values that seek to damn others for the lives they live. I see no threat to the hard-won liberal freedoms that really matter. Indeed, I predict the steady rolling out of more.

For all the clean sincerity and earnestness of the new government, they are all of them deep-dyed liberals at heart: whatever the Conservatives say about freedom, (usually of the Ritz-dining variety) it is they at heart who want to constrict and constrain our lives whenever they get the chance. Give me Labour's worry over listeria in pasteurised cheese any time over the Tory Mary Whitehouse and Victoria Gillick tendencies.

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THE INDEPENDENT

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MOMENTS THAT MADE THE YEAR

THE INDEPENDENT
FRIDAY 26 DECEMBER 1997

Even through our tears we were surprised by what we saw; we didn't realise how much we had changed



Sea of emotion: There were many unforgettable images during that remarkable week: the flag-draped coffin, the young princes dressed in black, Earl Spencer in the Abbey – and above all, acre upon acre of flowers. Photograph: Tom Pilstone

While there are those who argue that we all went mad for a week in September, that the death of a rather silly, self-obsessed woman was blown out of all proportion, that her passing meant no more or less than the death of any other individual, that nothing has really changed, the event that will keep 1997 in our memories for years to come was, of course, the death of Diana, Princess of Wales.

No one could have predicted the reaction: the Ballardin nature of her demise, the huge display of public grief, the sense of national reassessment that was in the atmosphere, the spectacle of a Labour leader trying to drag the monarchy into the 20th century. Instead, we look on in amazement as we behaved as if we were living in another country. And we were. It was just that no one realised that this new country was ours, that it has been for some time and what felt like new territory for some was already home for many others.

Three months later we are asking if it meant anything at all. I said at the time that to look for a direct political correlate to arise from the shock and grief surrounding Diana's death was always a mistake. Yes, there were moments of anti-monarchy *feeling skin* to, but not the same thing as, republicanism. There was revulsion expressed for the stuffiness of the royals, there was a feeling of a new beginning, an optimism about New Labour, a relief at the ending of Tory rule, a building mistrust of all institutions. All these things were in the air but not in a consciously politicised way.

... Much of what was expressed was expressed in the first person. That was what was admired about Diana. She validated personal experience; she re-wrote the script to suit herself. Even though she was a star, somehow most of this world, what you heard repeated was that she was a real person, she spoke from the heart, she was authentic.

Her modernity, in contrast to the rest of the royals, embodied a cultural shift, a fresh way of doing things, that doesn't fit into neat political categories. These repercussions are still being felt throughout society. Diana was not a feminist but she was a product of the raising of female expectations brought about by feminism. She understood instinctively that the personal was political, for she lived a life in which she was expected to suppress her personal feelings because of public duty.

The scenes of mourning that filled our papers and screens in September were unlike anything we had seen before, yet of course there were dissenters, who thought it was all too much fuss about nothing. While I am prepared to accept that their feelings were perfectly genuine, they do not seem to accept that the feelings of those at Kensington Palace or in the Mall were equally genuine.

It was easier to dismiss this collective grief as hysteria, as fuelled by the media, as essentially

THE DEATH
OF DIANA
BY
SUZANNE
MOORE

empty. Some of this was to do with the equation of any kind of massing together of people as innately fascist. This fear of crowds was instilled during the darkest of the Thatcher years. Where some saw a floral revolution, Ian Jack reports the phrase "floral fascism" in "Those who Felt Differently", in *Grazia*.

Yet in looking back at the remarks of so many intellectuals, I am struck by their triteness in comparison with the self-awareness and thoughtfulness of the "ordinary people" I spoke to at the time. One by one, from Gore Vidal downwards, these great men told us the crowds were not really grieving for Diana but for themselves, as if we didn't know that, as if grief did

'We had simply recognised that Britishness need not be stuck in the 19th century'

not always contain this element, as if it is not possible to feel a connection with someone you didn't know. No one said this when we cried for the poor bairns of Dunblane.

In contrast, members of the public told me that they were grieving for what had happened to this country in the last 18 years, that when someone dies you re-evaluate your own life, your own priorities and that's what they felt we should all be doing as a nation. They told me that it was rare to witness real goodness in a public figure, that they themselves were surprised about how they felt and most memorably, I can still hear a Rasta guy saying: "She's like a magnet, man. Even though she's dead she's still a magnet - pulling people towards

I saw dignity and though I saw tears being shed and shed my own, people were not overwhelmed by their feelings but quietly in control of them. We had not suddenly become American or European. We had simply recognised that Britishness need not be stuck in the 19th century.

Since her death, some have railed against the new "emotional correctness", where feelings must be shown at all times. Indeed, the behaviour of some

of Louise Woodward's supporters could not have been more inappropriate and undignified. Emotional correctness, though, like political correctness, is a term only used by those who prefer the repressive status quo.

Popular culture has for years been moving in the direction of the subjective, the confessional, the unashamedly emotional. Official public culture has yet to catch up with these changes. Earl Spencer's speech struck this note and I will always remember the mutinous ripple of applause that spread from outside the cathedral to the inside.

Cynics argue that while we became touchy-feely for a week or so, that much-heralded new sensitivity has not materialised. Indeed, when the Government cuts benefits to the poorest women and children, it seems a joke.

Diana's death, though, coming after the Labour victory, the hype of Cool Britannia, the talk of re-branding Britain, gave much rise to much discussion of the New Britain, as though such an identity could arise fully formed and uncontested.

We saw in Diana a woman seeking to find herself, to somehow speak a more intimate and personal language within the discourse of public life. We saw a woman trying to reshape a role for herself when she had been used for little more than breeding in captivity. And we saw in the midst of the mourning for her a desire to do things differently.

We wanted tradition thrown over in the name of honest emotion. Now at least we know that the Queen is capable of grieving in public: she shed a tear at the loss of her yacht, something she did not do publicly for the loss of her daughter-in-law.

The royals have learnt to accept what they could not accept when Diana was alive, that they have to change. Tony Blair has stepped in to advise them, which is worrying, given his pledges on constitutional reform.

Earl Spencer has been shown to be a complete bastard, though I don't see how that makes his speech any less powerful. The rest of us have gone back to normal. Or not quite. For something has changed.

Even through our tears we were surprised by what we saw; we didn't realise how much we had changed. But we had. Why

it took the death of a confused and over-privileged woman to show this to each other I don't know. All I do know is that while we have lost her, I hope that we do not lose the values of love and compassion that she was seen to have represented and that for an extraordinary week we were not ashamed to talk openly about in public as well as in private.

The event that defined the year was really one in which, in an unprecedented way, we were seeking to define ourselves.

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MOMENTS THAT MADE THE YEAR

When the worst of times became a time for conciliation



The peacemaker: Mo Mowlam, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, who has come to personify the climate of hope in the province
Photograph: Brian Harris

In Northern Ireland, what started looking like a bad year wound up as one of the best of years. It began with death and destruction; it closed with most of the parties at the talks table, and most of the guns silent.

It hardly needs saying that the obstacles and problems ahead are daunting.

The peace process is fraught with dangers and pressure-points which could, and almost certainly will, cause great disruption.

It is a fair bet that significant acts of violence lie ahead.

Yet there is also a sense that the idea of a peace process is taking deeper and deeper root. The original concept of inclusivity - the theory that those who had used violence for so many years might be brought into a new system rather than perpetually frozen out - was highly controversial.

Its early exponents, such as John Hume, were reviled, their moves to bring in the violent prodigals easily caricatured as appeasement of terrorism. But as the year ends, the inclusive philosophy of the peace process seems on the way to becoming the political norm.

At the beginning of the year the key question was whether another 25-year cycle of violence was in the making. The IRA had just bombed the Army's Northern Ireland headquarters; one soldier was killed and others had near-miraculous escapes.

Spring brought IRA disruption of English motorway traffic and postponement of the Grand National, while in Belfast there were sporadic loyalist killings. Political talks, which were going on in Belfast without Sinn Féin, seemed to be going nowhere.

But then the election changed everything.

Where John Major had played it long, mindful always of Ulster Unionist suspicion and disapproval of the whole project, Tony Blair and Mo Mowlam, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, went for momentum.

Early setbacks made it all look hopeless: the IRA shot two police officers and handling of the annual Drumcree marching controversy soured relations between nationalists and the Government.

PEACE IN IRELAND BY DAVID MCKITTRICK

Things were so bad, coming up to the main 12 July Orange marches, that 400 extra troops were drafted.

But then the Orange Order called off some contentious marches, transforming the atmosphere at a stroke.

Even so, the IRA truce of 20 July came generally as a surprise.

The Government, undeterred by continuing violence and communal friction, had systematically addressed republican preconditions for a cessation by, for example, dropping Mr Major's demand for prior decommissioning of IRA weapons.

The republicans were impressed by the Government's willingness to engage with their concerns; they were impressed too by Labour's huge majority and that in Dublin a new government was headed by Fianna Fáil, well-disposed towards the peace process.

Unlike the IRA truce of 1994, the second cessation was not greeted with euphoria.

The second time round everyone had learnt hard lessons, and knew there were no guarantees it would hold in all circumstances.

None the less, it unlocked the door for political progress, paving the way for a series of historic moments.

Labour judged that its majority gave it leeway to exert strong pressure on Unionists to get into talks with Sinn Féin. It may also have judged that the general Protestant population was more ready for dialogue than the often negative and hostile attitude of some Unionist politicians suggested.

Autumn brought momentous events. The Rev Ian Paisley opted out of the talks process, but David Trimble, after soul-searching, led his larger Ulster Unionist Party into a process which included Sinn Féin. Tony Blair shook the hand of Gerry Adams, first in Belfast and then, with tremendous symbolic significance, inside 10 Downing Street.

Viewed up close on a day-to-day basis, it has often been tedious. The talks continue but the pace is glacially slow, and earlier this month the parties failed to agree even an agenda for the new year. Unionists sit in the same room as Sinn Féin but will not talk to them.

From one perspective this can seem dispiriting and ominous. So too can the fissures which opened within so many important components: some members of the IRA and Sinn Féin resigned, fearing a sell-out; the Orange Order seems split between moderates and militants; the Ulster Unionist party has critics outside its ranks and within them.

And there is still violence. The IRA killed three people before its ceasefire but loyalist violence claimed 11 lives throughout the year.

The major republican and loyalist groups are inside the process but others, smaller but potentially deadly, are on the outside and intent on wrecking it.

Next year will bring many testing moments. Will the truce hold? Can the outsiders disrupt the process? Can Sinn Féin and the IRA accept an outcome which delivers something less than the republican goal of Irish unity? There are many other contentious issues, including prison releases and policing reform.

It is also the case that relations between the nationalist and Unionist communities can be described as unfriendly and even hostile. Recurring marching controversies and political disagreements have left much bitterness in many minds.

Viewed against this background, the events of the year seem even more startling. The year began with war; it has not ended with peace, for that can only be declared with any confidence after the emergence of political agreement and the successful operation of new arrangements.

That will take years and there are no guarantees the process will stay on the rails. Yet the year closes with an immeasurably better situation than it opened; with hopes that political breakthroughs can be made and with hope that historians may some day conclude that 1997 was the year when Northern Ireland finally turned the corner.

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How the Far East miracle went west

In terms of its speed, unexpectedness and its potential effect on the lives of people all over the world, the East Asian economic crisis was the crisis of 1997, and it is certainly not over yet. What began in July with the collapse of the Thai baht ends the year with the continuing plummet of the Korean won having, in between, caused varying degrees of mayhem in Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Japan, Singapore and Hong Kong.

Despite \$100bn of promised aid from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the plunge of the region's currencies shows few signs of bottoming out, but the response to the crisis outside the region has fallen into two distinct phases. For the first few months of the crisis, much foreign comment treated it as a spectator event, an object of fascination, but abstract. Interest and more than a little *schadenfreude*. It appeared to confirm a fashionable argument, most trenchantly argued by the economist Paul Krugman - that the "Asian tiger" model of high growth and aggressive investment is unsustainable in the long run.

But since November, when the contagion spread to South Korea and Japan, the focus has shifted from the theoretical to the practical: what effect is Asia's pain going to have on the rest of the world?

For those without specialised business interests, a weak Thai baht means little more than cheaper holidays in Phuket. As Indonesia followed and, to a lesser degree, Malaysia and the Philippines, so did cheap holidays in Bali, Penang and Mindanao.

But when the contagion spread to Korea, it was a different matter. People don't take package tours in Pusan. And, as the former eleventh largest economy in the world, the pain of the Korean squeeze is being felt around the world. The stifled sniggering at the difficulties of the tigers was silenced this week with a prediction by the IMF that the Asian crisis will cut one per cent off growth next year throughout the world.

Korea's credit rating has sunk below those of Croatia and El Salvador, making it impossible for companies to fund their ambitious overseas plans. In Britain alone, the huge Samsung and Daewoo conglomerates announced the "postponement" of billions of pounds worth of plants and jobs. And the crisis is not purely an economic one: what began as a series of events in the financial markets, is also throwing up political problems.

Despite their eclipse by the chaos in the markets, Asia's political tensions remain, and they are exacerbated by financial insecurity - if the reunification of North and South Korea looked a tricky and expensive proposition before, it appears doubly so now, with the South's economy on its knees. But the bigger problem is the psychological effect of the collapse of the Asian tigers, and the tremendous blow they have suffered to self-esteem.

Responsibility for managing this tension will fall in large part to Britain, as new EU president, and host of the second Asia-Europe Meeting (Asem) in London next spring. The shock of sudden collapse has understandably strained nerves and tempers, and there have been ugly and sinister outbursts made worse by the West's gloating. The insinuations by the Malaysian prime minister, Mahathir Mohamad, that the whole thing was part of a Jewish conspiracy orchestrated by the speculator George Soros did nothing to restore the faith of investors in his country. In Korea, demonstrators have accused the IMF and its American and Japanese backers of economic "imperialism" in making conditions for the bail out of their country.

The world has seen nationalist movements flourish before on the back of economic collapse. It seems, for the moment, a distant fear - but then a year ago, so did the present state of affairs. Either way, the history of the 1997 crisis will not be clear until well into next year.

A tale of two years

Brown envelope and humping

A tale of two cities – with two very different endings

LOUISE WOODWARD TRIAL
BY DAVID USBORNE

A baby-sitter is accused of murdering the infant in her care. Born into a white suburban home on the outskirts of one of America's biggest cities, the toddler's name was Matthew and his life lasted just a few short months. The trial is complicated and laden with conflicting medical evidence. But the jury apparently has little difficulty in reaching a verdict: the defendant is found guilty and the sentence is life imprisonment.

Read this, and unless you spent 1997 on a different planet, you would be forgiven for assuming the child in this case was eight-month-old Matthew Eappen and the childminder the 19-year-old British au pair Louise Woodward. You would be wrong. Nor, by the way, is the city Boston. It is Chicago.

The trial of Donna Gist ended 10 days ago. She was convicted in a DuPage County Court on 15 December of the murder of Matthew Hendrickson, who was four months old. The similarities between this and the Woodward case were striking. More important is this singular difference: the courthouse was not besieged by reporters and television crews. In fact, the Gist trial barely registered outside the court. Nor did her conviction. There has been no Free Donna Gist Campaign.

The easiest explanation for the absence of publicity in the Gist case was that Court TV – the cable channel that fed pictures from the Woodward trial to Sky News and the news bulletins of ITN and the BBC – did not cover it. Even if the cameras had been there, it is a fair bet few would have been interested in the trial. Gist was not Woodward. At 34, she is nearly twice Woodward's age and comes from a poor background. She is also black.

"To the unfortunate extent that race plays a role in social standing in our society, that Gist is black is doubtless a factor in her obscurity," wrote *Chicago Tribune* columnist Eric Zorn, as the Gist trial wound down. But it was not just Woodward's colour that was important, Zorn

said. "If the au-pair trial cynics had asked if everyone would have been so fascinated by Louise Woodward's story had she been white but 15 years older and a career caregiver of more modest means and prospects, the answer would have been the same: No." Thus, if Woodward had not been a young, intelligent, not bad-looking white girl with, one assumes, hopes of a happy and fruitful life, would we have seen such an outcry when her original guilty verdict came down on 30 October? Events in Chicago suggest not.

When she counts her fortunes, Woodward will doubtless think first of her trial judge, Hiller Zobel. He stunned the legal world on 10 November when he slashed the jury sentence from murder to manslaughter and freed her on the 279 days she had already served. But she might also pause to ponder why her case – unlike Gist's – so fired emotion and the role that played in giving her back her freedom.

Most journalists who covered the trial will probably admit they were not prepared for the extraordinary dimensions that the story took on.

Even in hindsight, it is not immediately apparent why it commanded the headlines in the way it did, and for so long. But the answer surely lies in the trial's cast.

For readers of newspapers and followers of the television news, this was a tragedy filled with players familiar to us. And we could identify with the issues raised. Was it right for Matthew's parents, Deborah and Sunil, professionals on the threshold of successful medical careers, to sub-contract care for their two young children to a teenager with scant experience in the area?

The authors of the hate-mail

that buried the Eappens during the trial obviously thought it was not. And even if we are not ourselves 18-year-olds in that tantalising gap year between school and university, when new horizons suddenly open up, many of us have been there and know teenagers who are there now.

Some of us may not have warmed to Woodward – indeed, we may, since the trial's end, have concluded privately that she was responsible somehow for Matthew's death even if she did not plot to murder him – but we think we can easily divine her.

There was some celebrity attraction to the case before the trial started: the lawyers hired to represent Woodward, a workaday pair of defence lawyers from Boston's waterfront named Silverglate and Good, had managed to recruit Barry Scheck to their team, already famous as one of the "dream team" that represented OJ Simpson.

"There was someone with whom almost everyone could identify in this case," said Shari Turner, a professor at Boston University. "It mainstreamed some of the issues. For instance, people are enormously ambivalent about child care."

The public impact of the Woodward trial – it took up all of October and will come blazing back in March, when the Massachusetts Supreme Court begins hearings on appeals from both sides – would not matter if we believe this from Judge Zobel: that in making his decision on whether to revise the original jury verdict he was able completely to isolate himself from all the ballyhoo.

In one of his many off-the-record chats with journalists, he reported being bombarded with letters, phone calls, FedEx packets and telegrams from

people all around the country offering advice on what he should do. He ignored it all, he said, just like he ignored the tidal waves of opinion and punditry on the television and in the newspapers.

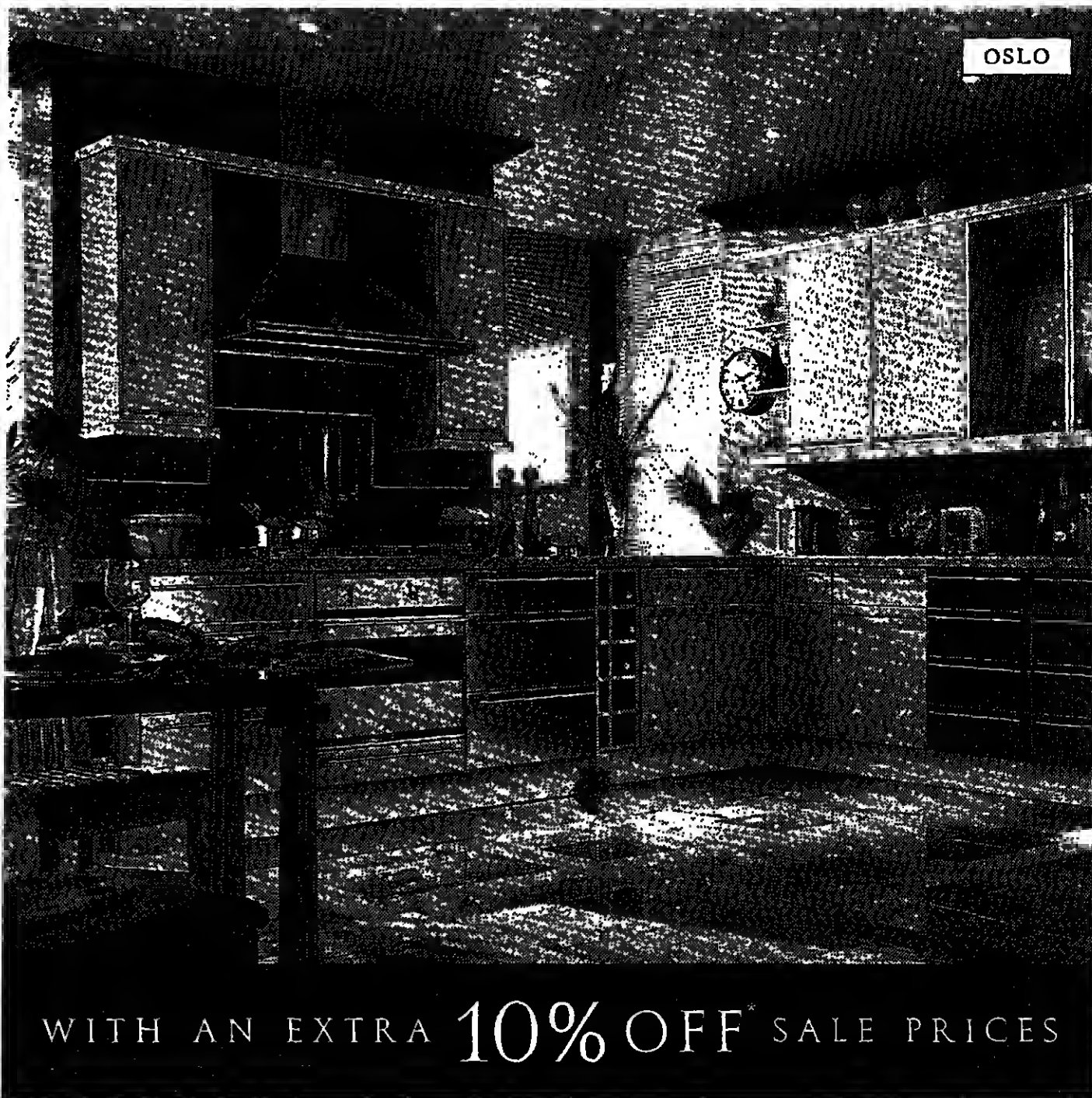
Well, possibly. But ask yourself this: had the cameras not been in court for Woodward's trial, had there not been such intense interest in it as it played out and had there not been such a tornado of public reaction to her initial conviction on 30 October, are we really to believe that Judge Zobel would have come back 10 days later in the way that he did and overturned that conviction?

If you are not sure of the answer, think about Donna Gist. And don't hold your breath waiting for her judge to bring her last-minute salvation.



Spotlight: It is hard to believe media coverage did not influence the judge in the Woodward case. Photograph: Jim Bourg/AP

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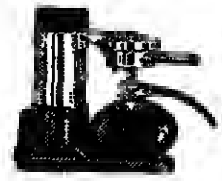
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Brown envelopes, white knights and humping humbug

POLITICAL SLEAZE
BY DAVID AARONOVITCH

1997, of course, was the year that sleaze ended. It finished on the night of 1 May, when the nation purged itself with the biggest bout of colonic irrigation in our electoral history. In one great swoosh, the cleansing waters swept round the heads of the body politic, and flushed out all the encrusted crud that had accreted over nearly 20 years. On 2 May we felt light and empty, ready for anything.

Only nine months ago, it all seemed so different. The wavy lines appear on our mental screens, and we are transported back in time and space to the middle of March. To find the Prime Minister, John Major, telling the House of Commons why the Downey report on cash-for-questions cannot be ready before the general election that he has called, just two days earlier.

Neil Hamilton wants us to see the report, too. He is anxious to remove from his reputation the taint of having been a brown envelope recipient of Mohamed Al Fayed, the Mad Avenging Egyptian. Hospitality at the Ritz, well all right. Backhanders, not on your nelly. Which is why he will not stand down at the forthcoming election, but will vigorously contest his Tatton seat.

Meanwhile, the *Sun* captures a Beckenham Tory, Piers Merchant, in a clinch with a 17-year-old "friend of the family". Fearful that he might be discovered if he snogs the aptly named Ms Cox indoors, Merchant tries to evade scrutiny by giving her one on a park bench in public view. Momentarily disconcerted, the *Sun* rallies and takes the snaps. No one's business, but a great story. Especially with the erection, sorry, election, days away. Merchant survives – for the moment.

Sleaze dominates the early part of the campaign. So, back to Tatton, and enter the Man in White. Wounded war

correspondent, Martin Bell, declares that he will run as the anti-sleaze candidate. And is written off by many as a naïf, who will fall in the first hail of arrows, as battle begins.

On 1 May, Bell wins. Blair wins. Paddy wins. Alex wins. even Dafydd wins. But the Tories, inseparable in the public mind from sleaze, lose big time. Everyone absorbs the lessons of this, which is that there must now be full, open accountability. And a privacy law.

So we enter the dreamtime of the Blair honeymoon, during which we can deal with a few bits of unfinished business. Neil Hamilton is indicted by Downey, appeals to the Commons select committee, and gains some small sympathy when it refuses his plea that Mr Fayed be questioned. And Piers Merchant proves the wisdom of his earlier al fresco strategy, by being filmed humping the friend under a duvet in York. Now not only is it no one's business, but no one cares. Except the *Sunday Mirror*, the Merchants and their Cox. Piers stands down, and the Tories hang on to the seat by a thousand votes.

Meanwhile, the Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, is discovered to be having an affair, admits it, separates from his wife, and lives with his lover, and – to the chagrin of the Tories, no one outside his family and circle of friends and the *Daily Mail* considers it their concern. Sleaze is dead! It is replaced by a Freedom of Information Bill. The lobby system of unattributable press briefings is modified, so that "sources close to the

Prime Minister" become, "the Prime Minister's Press Secretary". An era in British politics is coming to an end. We have commissioners for every form of behaviour, and all is well.

Or would be, if it hadn't been for Bernie Ecclestone. Bernie, once a donor to Tory party funds, had become a large Labour giver. He gave and he gave, until he had given a million pounds (an amount now referred to as "a Bernie"). The fact of his giving was disclosed by Labour, but not the scale.

None of this might have mattered, had not the PM agreed to see Bernie and pals to discuss tobacco sponsorship of Formula One, and hear their worries that a ban might do them a whole lot of no good at all. When it was known that the Government had (a) bought Bernie's argument, and (b) earlier received a big donation, nasty suspicious minds put two and two together and came up with a million.

As the row deepened Mr Blair went on television, apologised for the misunderstanding, said that he himself had instigated sending the money back to Bernie and that he was now referring the whole matter of party funding to yet another commission.

And finally, there was Paymaster-General Geoffrey Robinson, a rich man in a poor person's party, who was found to have offshore accounts, and subjected by the Tory party and the *Guardian* to a flurry of resignation demands on the grounds of hypocrisy.

Hypocrisy maybe, but not sleaze. That died in 1997.

MOMENTS THAT MADE THE YEAR

The Britons had sneered and bullied and ruled the roost. No one in Hong Kong, however amnesiac, could ignore that sordid heritage



Flag day: There was respect, even affection, as the Old Firm left. But can Britain's democratic legacy endure despite Peking's expectations of obedience? Photograph: Tom Pilsten

sure, there were the moments of history to worry about. End of an era, new dawn for the millennium, that sort of thing. But many Hong Kongers were more concerned with the weather. Beginning on 30 June, it rained. And rained and rained. City pavements and streets turned into what seemed like white-water rapids. Large parts of the transport system ground to a halt because of landslides. Raindrops mixed with the tears on the cheeks of Chris Patten, the departing governor.

The floods - dramatic and even, even by Hong Kong's tropical-downpour standards - were as much of a local talking point as the history that they seemed to eclipse. And yet, the handover of Hong Kong to China was not a wash-out. Almost the opposite: it was remarkable or being so unremarkable.

This enormous and enormously pre-planned event had been in the pipeline for the past 99 years. Ever since the British signed the case in the imperial "we make all the rules" heyday. Realistically, the handover had been under discussion for the past 13 years. And, for the past two years, large teams were involved in little else but planning or the Big Day.

Despite that, there were moments when the handover seemed perilously close to chaos. There had been so much fancy diplomatic footwork on both sides that some details of etiquette remained confused, even at the eleventh hour. Hence the hesitations and confusions by the Prince of Wales and Chinese President Jiang Zemin - shall we sit down? Shall we stand up? Where must we go? - at the handover itself, as the British and Chinese flags fluttered photographically in the fake breeze (oaky day!) of a wind machine.

Thousands of journalists converged on Hong Kong for his last moment of post-colonial existence. The hotels thought they would be booked up months in advance, hence the off-kilter tripping of the prices. The move backfired somewhat when it turned out that foolish firms were richly rewarded: luxurious rooms were available at knockdown prices to anybody who avoided making a reservation until the very last moment. Hoteliers were seriously disoriented, as were some of their out-of-pocket guests.

Unlike some of the other extraordinary moments of history in the past few years - the fall of the Berlin Wall, for example, or the release of Nelson Mandela in South Africa - the momentous importance of the Hong Kong handover was not ways up-front. The ever-pragmatic Hong Kongers were reluctantly laid-back. There were some celebrations on the night of 30 June. But drunken parties were more exuberant than the long Kongers themselves, most of whom simply sat at home and watched the television.

None the less, it was important. It was the end of a colonial era - and in that respect was warmly welcomed by all Hong Kongers, whatever their political beliefs. Many in Britain came to identify the British legacy with the governorship of Chris Patten: heroically or opaquely trying to preserve the people of Hong Kong from the

END OF EMPIRE BY STEVE CRAWSHAW

undemocratic manoeuvrings of Peking. But there had been many years of British rule before that. The Britons had sneered and bullied and ruled the roost, because that was what they were born to do. No Hong Konger, however generous or amnesiac, could ignore that sordid heritage. My single most memorable and shocking encounter during the handover period took place in a little apartment in Kowloon: a meeting with a 101-year-old who grew up during a century of British rule, before finally outliving it. His knowledge of English was confined to a handful of obscenities - the words that he had heard most frequently from his colonial masters.

Now that the British were departing, there was respect, even affection. Above all, everybody knew that this was the beginning of a more Chinese Hong Kong, which is where the real mysteries begin. Many analysts argued that the relative calm during the handover was misleading. As soon as the television crews went, it was said, the crackdown against the democrats would begin, unnoticed by the rest of the world.

In reality, the democrats have remained almost undisturbed since 1 July. There are still many who believe that Tung Chee-hwa (multi-millionaire businessman, new chief executive of Hong Kong, and friend of Peking) is, in the words of an official who knows him well, somewhat "allergic to democracy". But whatever his private beliefs, there has not been the much-heralded crackdown.

Hong Kongers have been thinking more about money than about politics (nothing new, there), as the regional markets have rollercoasted and nosedived in recent weeks and months. Meanwhile, however, the impact of reunification with China will only begin to be understood as the months and years go by. Perhaps Hong Kong will gradually be eaten up by the economically successful but politically repressive mainland Chinese regime. Or perhaps Hong Kong's tiny canker of democracy - a few million people who don't like being told what to do, and don't mind saying so - will gradually rot the huge Communist apple. The endlessly parroted official line is that Hong Kong and China will continue to have "one country, two systems". But that will only last for a limited time.

By 2047, even according to the official agreement, there will be one system. In practice, the convergence may come much sooner. Will the jails of Hong Kong fill up with free-thinkers - or will the hardline regime in Peking be the one to crumble? Six months after the *Britannia* glided into the Hong Kong night, the questions about the future are still unanswered. The biggest changes are yet to come.

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MOMENTS THAT MADE THE YEAR

THE INDEPENDENT
FRIDAY 26 DECEMBER 1997

Hypocrisy and deceit: the essential ingredients for war

THE MIDDLE EAST
BY ROBERT FISK

Madeline Albright, America's increasingly ineffectual Secretary of State, described 1997 as "not a good year for the peace process". It was a disaster, which in the coming months may well bring war to the Middle East.

As usual in the region, 1997 started in hypocrisy and deceit. The Algerian government announced that "terrorism was on its last legs". Then a series of mass atrocities – the systematic throat-cutting by supposed "Islamists" of thousands of women and children in the poor villages of the Mitidja plain – proved that the Algerian civil war was now of Bosnian proportions.

A few weeks later, the Egyptian government announced that "the terrorists were finished". Then came Luxor and the murder and mutilation of 58 foreign tourists. In Lebanon, the year began with more talk of the nation's rebirth and reconstruction – and ended with massive external debts and growing fear of another war with Israel.

But it was the Arab-Israeli "peace" that was finally buried this year, when the Israeli Prime

Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, decided – in total contravention of all the agreements guaranteed by the United States – to build yet another Jewish settlement on occupied Arab land. Har Homa, most of the Western press obediently called it – the Arab name of Abu Ghoneim – was

stood by America – whose troops supported the Western armies in the 1991 Gulf War, whose investments have been lodged in New York, whose lands are protected or lived in (or occupied) by American troops – watched appalled, their impotence as obvious as their

'All over the region, Arabs wanted help from Europe. Some hope'

largely forgotten as Israel created facts on the ground – and the Palestinians, pleading vainly to the Americans, the French, even the British, watched their dreamed-for Palestinian state turn to dust.

The Arab nations which had

sense of betrayal. Those Palestinians who had long since abandoned any allegiance to Yasser Arafat expressed their own frustration in a predictably bloody and terrible way: with wicked suicide bombings in Israel. An even more angry

Netanyahu then denounced "terrorism" and accused Arafat of giving the "green light" to the bloodbath.

The pattern is now established. Israel blames Arab "terrorism" for lack of progress in the "peace process" and refuses to make "concessions" (i.e. fulfil Israel's commitments) in the agreement. He then announces new settlements on stolen land – and gives further provocation to would-be Palestinian murderers.

By year's end, the corruption of the dictatorial and brutal Arafat was complete when he agreed to allow the CIA to decide which Palestinians should or should not be released from prison.

Mr Netanyahu, meanwhile, went in for a little "terrorism" of his own, sending at least two Israeli murderers to kill an official of Hamas – which claimed at least two of this year's bombings – in the capital of friendly Jordan, whose King Hussein is increasingly despised by his own people for his peace with Israel. The Israeli secret service was blamed for "botching" the attempted murder – not for trying to carry it out against all international law – but it was enough to convince the Arabs that Israel did not want peace.

For when Mrs Albright tried to court them to attend the Qatar Arab-Israeli economic summit, almost all boycotted the meeting, preferring instead to turn up at Tehran – in the capital of America's principle adversary in the Middle East – for an Islamic summit at which Iran's new president, Mohamed Khatami, issued an unprecedented call for a dialogue with the "American people". President Clinton, still fearful of the Israeli lobby which now virtually controls US Middle East policy, said he'd like a dialogue too – oo "terrorism" and the Middle East "peace process", the two subjects upon which the Iranians have no interest in talking to the Americans.

But the Europeans – having stormed out of Iran when a German court blamed the supreme leadership for the murder of Kurdish opponents in Berlin – crept back to Tehran in the autumn to continue their own dialogue with one of the Middle East's great oil nations. All over the region, Arabs, too, wanted to ask the Europeans – the very nations which created the morasse in which the Middle East finds itself – for help. They wanted a European initiative, European pressure on Israel and oo America. Some hope.

When Saddam Hussein ordered US weapons inspectors out of Iraq, President Clinton thought he could talk tough and launch a few more cruise missiles at the impoverished Iraqis. The Arabs told him to get lost. When Mrs Albright turned up in the region to dig the long-dead peace process out of its grave, the tough-talking secretary of state turned into a mouse, blandly mouthing Israeli government policies, claiming that killing was worse than "building houses" – her mendacious reference to stealing Arab land – and suggesting that settlement-building, which contradicts the very foundation of the peace, was legal. By the time she got round to mentioning Palestinian grievances, the Israelis were treating her with the contempt she deserved.

At all this, the bad guys of the region rejoiced: Saddam finished the year by telling the Americans they could not visit his palaces, even if they did think a warhead or two might be concealed under the four-poster beds. The Arab "partners for peace" turned up en masse to demonstrate their friendship towards the new Iran. And the Americans went on supporting the Algerian government (which is increasingly implicated in the massacres – or at least the failure to prevent them) and the Egyptian government, whose own corruption and brutality has helped provoke its own home-grown and vicious rebellion.

By year's end, the ceasefire in southern Lebanon was a charade, with villagers being killed – by Hizbollah but more frequently by Israelis – every week. Israel talked about fighting "a war against terrorism on two fronts", suggesting that a coming bloodbath would take place in both the West Bank and Lebanon. But whoever Mr Netanyahu thinks he might be fighting, the question must be asked: who would win?



Another day, another funeral: Algeria, where a civil war of Bosnian proportions has claimed thousands Photograph: Magnum

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MOMENTS THAT MADE THE YEAR

1997: when the Teletubbies' star rose, Oasis' fell, and Hale-Bopp blazed a trail across the heavens



Star quality: Chris Evans, who liked the company so much he bought it, Dolly, no mere lamb chop, and Kirsty Young, the news and current affairs darling of Channel 5



Strange beings arrived in Britain in 1997.

So we said "Hello Dolly" to an extraordinary cloned sheep. Meanwhile, half the country was saying "Eh-Oh" in imitation of those spooky things in nappies - the Teletubbies.

Children took to tamagotchis, tiny Japanese electronic pets, and in the spring we

all stared at the Hale-Bopp comet streaking across the sky.

Lara Croft, the busty babe in the computer game Tomb Raider II, took over cyberspace, while Xena, warrior princess, became a star of the new Channel 5, fighting mythical beasts.

In pop, the big names of '96 shrank. Out went Oasis, with

their indifferent third album and Britpop lost its edge.

We finally realised the Spice Girls were a con. In came sounds of the Asian underground and Big Beat, while The Verve were the success of the year, with their album *Urban Hymns*.

In a retro world, oldies made a comeback.

Elton John's song for Diana, Princess of Wales, took him back to the top of the charts; brought him back from the pop dead.

Mick Jagger showed that he was still rock 'n' rollin' by becoming a dad at 54; and Michael Parkinson replayed his best bits and got a new show for 1998.

(Wogan is trying the same trick).

The likes of Wham!, Spandau Ballet and break-dancing were big again in an Eighties pop revival as *Dalrymple* dressing - glamour, glitter and sequins - returned with big City bonuses.

Fake fur was everywhere - knickers, kagouls, you name it - and four cow bedsprings were

more than a compensation for the hanning of T-bone steaks.

Buffalo Trainers, with their Seventies platforms, made jogging hard for the fashionable in their turned-up trousers.

Looking back a little further, the "secret agent" look a la Diana Rigg in *The Avengers* raged after Liz Hurley's success in *Austin Powers: International Man of Mystery*; and Medieval Babes cut a CD that made Gregorian chants hip for the first time in centuries.

If you wanted to make it big on the London stage, it paid to play dead.

So Sian Phillips excelled in *Marlene*, while impersonators of Hilda Baker, Kenneth Williams and Oscar Wilde (theatrical face of the year) all drew big crowds.

Success as Oscar in the movie *Wild* rehabilitated the ubiquitous Stephen Fry; and Michael Collins, the IRA leader, became a star again 75 years after his assassination, due to a biopic featuring Liam Neeson and because Gerry Adams became the first republican leader to enter Number 10 since the "Big Fellow" in 1921.

"Sensation" caused a stir in the art world - prompting fears of barbarians at the gates of the Royal Academy, which made a portrait of Myra Hindley, comprising children's handprints, the centrepiece of its exhibition.

Arundhati Roy wowed the literary world with her first novel, the Booker-winning *God of Small Things*.

Lord Chladin of Shaodwick PR resigned from running the Royal Opera House.

Condemned for leaving such a mess, applauded for carrying the can, he took the only course

HELLO,
GOODBYE
BY JACK
O'SULLIVAN

opeo to a smart PR man.

On TV, *This Life* was smothered and *Men Behaving Badly* was retired after a final Christmas binge. Farewell, I suspect, to "Friedos".

Michael Grade stubbed out his last cigar at Channel 4. Bet Lynch and Racquel pulled their last pints on the *Street*, while Cindy Beale deserted *EastEnders* only to return to huge acclaim. Steve Coogan nearly became yesterday's comedian, but was saved by *Alan Partridge*.

Kirsty Young, Channel 5's sexy blonde newscaster, was the big new discovery, putting the wind up the likes of Jon Soow on *Channel 4 News*. And ordinary folk like Maureen who couldn't pass her test in *Driving School* and Eileen, the manager from hell in *Hotel*, became instant stars of the new "reality soaps".

Zoe Ball took over Radio 1's early-morning DJ slot from Chris Evans, but Ginger had the last laugh with the success of his rival show on Virgin, later joining the ranks of media entrepreneurs by buying a controlling stake in the company.

A kindred spirit, Nicola Horlick, started the year sacked - from her job as a food manager with Morgao Grenfell, and returned to the public eye

to September with her book *Can You Have It All?*

Manchester United's Eric Cantona has kicked his last spectator.

Since leaving with another championship medal, he has been living in Barcelona and making a film about gangsters in Marseilles.

Peter O'Sullivan bowed out switched off his microphone after commenting on his 50th Grand National.

In cricket, Graham Gooch left the crease at 44, one of the all-time greats of county cricket and Dickie Bird called over for the last time.

The young sporting preteens got younger: Tiger Woods won the US Masters and 16-year-old Martina Hingis became the youngest Wimbledon women's champion this century.

And, of course, the Grim Reaper thinned the ranks of the great, the good and the infamous.

From academia, AL Rowse, Isaiah Berlin, Hans Eysenck; from politics, Mobutu Sese Seko, Deng Xiaoping, Chaim Herzog, Hastings Kamuzu Banda, Michael Manley, Georges Marchais, Paul Tsongas, Paulo Friere; from the cinema, Fred Zinneman, Stubby Kaye, James Stewart and Robert Mitchum; from the arts, Allen Ginsberg, Stephan Grappelli, Jonathan Silver, Roy Liechtenstein, Sir George Solti, William Burroughs, Laurie Lee, John Denver and rock singer Michael Hutchence.

Giaoni Versace and Sir James Goldsmith also passed away. The world mourned Diana and Mother Teresa. Journalism said goodbye to Sir John Juor, Vincent Hanna, Jeffrey Bernard, Bobby Campbell, and our own Ruth Picardie.

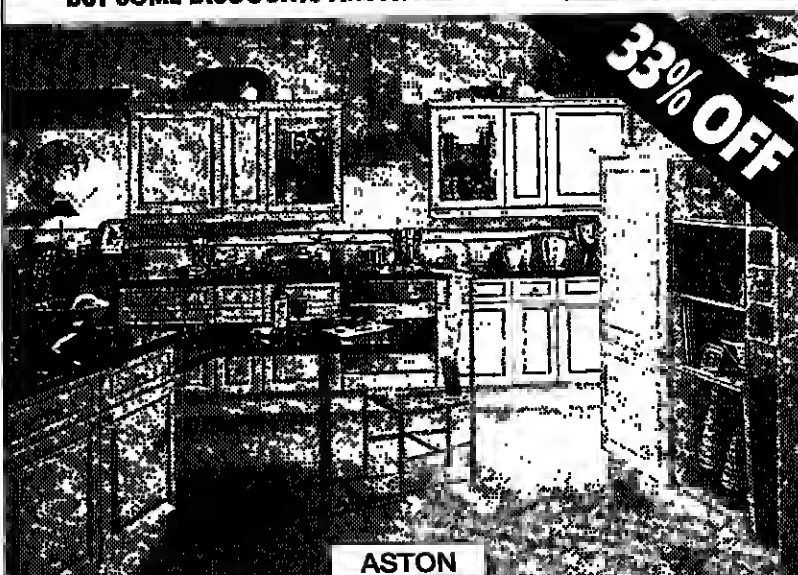
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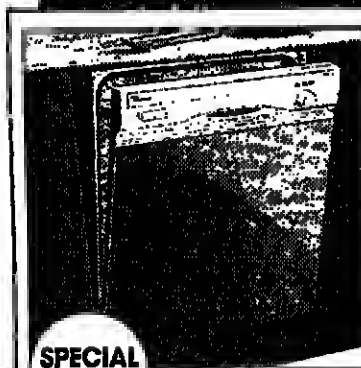
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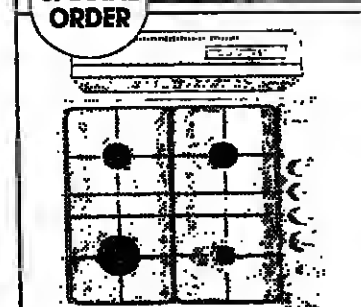
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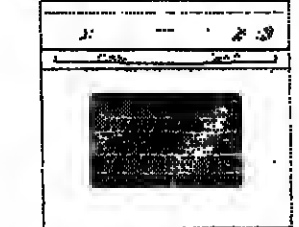
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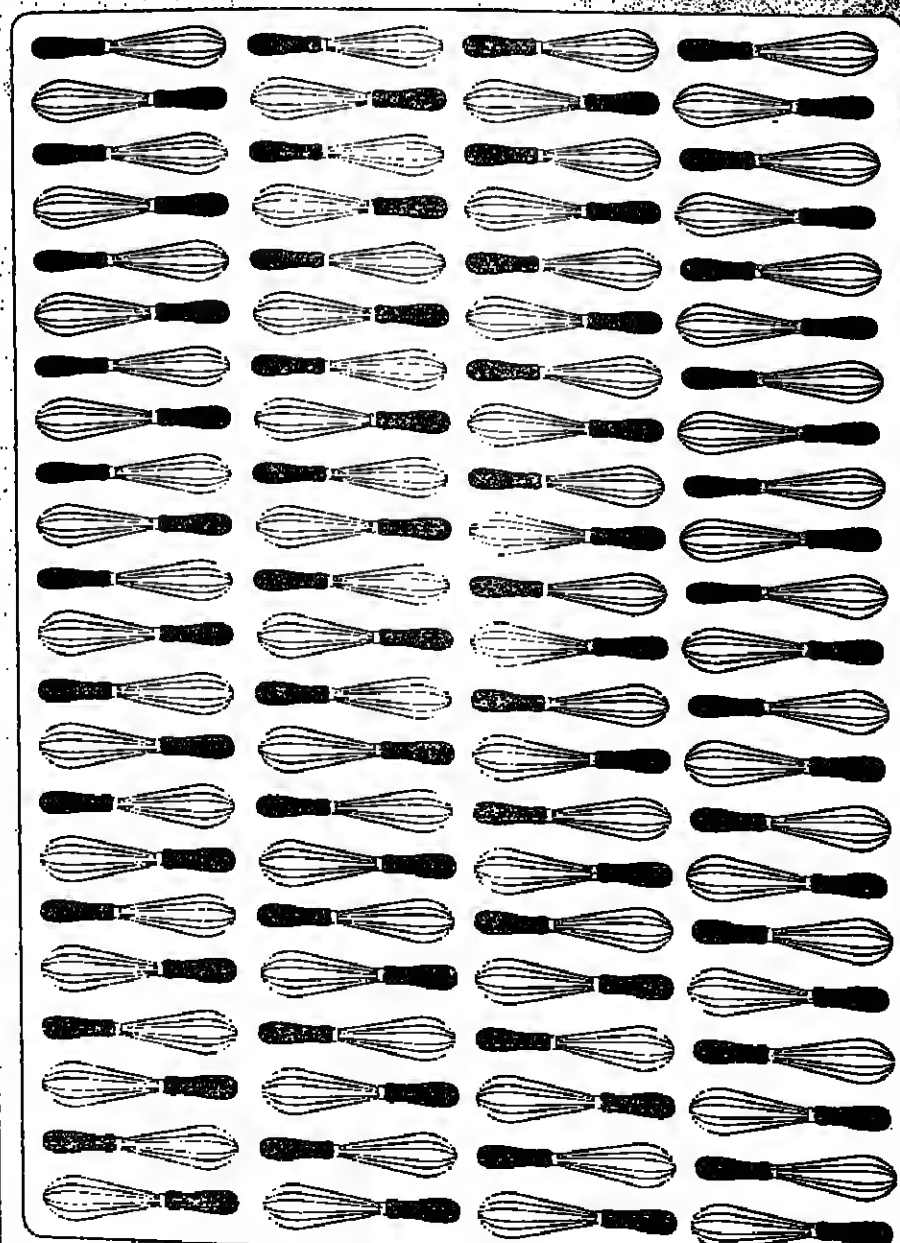
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MOMENTS THAT MADE THE YEAR

THE INDEPENDENT
FRIDAY 26 DECEMBER 1997
13

Fine romance proves that big isn't necessarily beautiful

FILM BY RYAN GILBEY

The best films can take you back to the first time you were ever held in the spell of the cinema screen, with the smell of popcorn hanging in your nostrils, and the sound of the projector whispering in the distance. There were a handful of pictures this year that made me remember how intoxicating cinema can be. My favourite film of 1997 was Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo & Juliet*, which proved to be less a case of the film-maker adapting the text than lunging at it with a broad sword. Rather than simply updating the play, Luhrmann dragged the setting into modern times while audaciously keeping the language firmly plugged into the late 16th century. The results were sensual, witty and bold, with moments that made Fellini look like a master of understatement.

David Lynch made a breathtaking comeback with *Lost Highway*, which reminded you of his uncanny ability to tap into primal, intangible fears and desires. It was the kind of daring picture that a director only usually has the guts to make at the start of his career or during exile. Meanwhile, David Cronenberg's *Crash* was finally released, and, as predicted by our more upstanding newspapers, many viewers imitated the behaviour of the film's characters and started getting their sexual kicks from causing motorway pile-ups. To date, the shocking number of deaths and injuries for which the film has been responsible amounts to no less than ... Hold on, I've got the figures here somewhere ... Oh, well, anyway, it's a lot, I can tell you.

There's every possibility that 1997 will be remembered as the year the big guns

were forced to check the quality of their ammunition; the year the blockbuster died (or at least retired in its sick-bed); the year in which audiences realised that size wasn't everything, and chose *The Full Monty* over *Speed 2*. Of course, they also chose *Bean*, but to dwell on that fact would sabotage the most water-tight argument for the burgeoning health of popular cinema, so we'll move quickly on.

As the American magazine *Premiere* reported, many of the major studios were rocked by poor box-office returns. Flushed with the success of last year's *Independence*

Day, 20th Century Fox loosened its purse strings and paid dearly when the budgets for *Volcano* and *Speed 2* were not matched by their profits, while Warner Bros didn't notch up a single blockbuster hit, despite putting their muscle behind *Conspiracy Theory*, *Contact* and *Batman and Robin*. Even the best of the potential blockbusters, *Men in Black*, lost the box-office fight, in Britain at least, to *The Full Monty*, which is still hogging multiplex screens long after such a supposedly surefire hit as *Batman and Robin* has been despatched to the shelves of a Woolworth's near you.

This isn't blind patriotism, since the best two "British" films of the year, *Nil By Mouth* and *The English Patient*, were buoyed up by foreign money, while the majority of the year's finest work came from beyond these shores. From France: *Ridicule*, *L'Appartement* and *A Self-Made Hero*; from Japan, *Kids Return*; and from Belgium, *Ma Vie en Rose*, a picture that had the impish joy of Tim Burton's early work.

Burton himself came all over bitter and twisted with *Mars Attacks!*, and actually learnt to laugh at himself, which was a big improvement. Many of the year's sharpest comedies also came from America - *Big Night*, *Swingers*, *Grosse Pointe Blank*, *Welcome to the Dollhouse*. Any picture that ends with George Segal and Mary Tyler Moore getting busted on drugs charges has a head

start on being the funniest film of the year, and David O Russell's *Flirting with Disaster* undoubtedly deserves that accolade. Horror made a significant comeback with three startling new movies: *The Frighteners*, *Scream* and *Allen Resurrection*.

But with any recognition of worth comes the simultaneous acknowledgement that there were some films out there that constituted serious crimes against humanity. This year may have been no worse than any other, but it's hard to remember that when you're watching *Dangerous Ground*, *Shooting Fish* or any film starring a member of the *Friends* cast who isn't Courteney Cox.

And can it really be a civilised world that even allows Chris Rea out of his house, let alone into a film studio to make *La Passione*?

Much to correct, much to withdraw, much to query

The critics are the last people to do these magic moments. What do they remember? Writing a review (or so I find) tends to achieve complete evacuation of the experience in question. Ah, but we have our cuttings to rifle and read over ... But then, what an opportunity there for self-doubt, misgiving and bewilderment. Can we take our own words for it? Can we even see what we were driving at, all those months ago? Much to correct, much to withdraw, much to blantly query.

For instance - and this is to the immediate point - I see that I wrote about "The Quick and the Dead", the South Bank Touring Exhibition on art and anatomy, that it "may well be the most interesting show to be seen this year". I wrote that in November, so I was not taking much of a chance, though still hedging prudently, and what "interesting" was supposed to mean I'm now not certain, but it could have simply meant "satisfying to write a review of".

And that's another thing these retrospectives make clear: how the sheer imperative to get something definite said can override all other considerations, and subsequently creates a positive barrier to retrieving your original response. And maybe there wasn't one, anyway. Maybe you made it all up. Oh,

VISUAL ARTS
BY TOM LUBBOCK

but surely it was interesting, and more, to see this historical line-up of anatomical creatures, some so hearty, some so queasy, all so remote from modern medical *froidure* - lots of issues there, but some fantastic drawings too: should have made a second visit, just to make sure.

And there were Duane Hanson's remarkable human simulacra, posed weary and weighed-down around the Saatchi Gallery, sculptures whose very lack of artistic handling made them peculiarly vulnerable and exposed to the viewer's mercy. Yes, I seem to have liked that a lot, seem to have been very persuasive on the subject - though, if the show was still on, I don't know that I'd run to see it again. And which is truer, the judgment then or now? Yet I still feel warmly about the exhibition, perhaps just because it was good to talk about.

A further professional deformation, that - to look back

foodly on the things that reviewed well, that made a good write-up. That would also include three German shows from early in the year. There was the Lovis Corinth retrospective at the Tate, the nearest thing to an art blockbuster this year, a lot of painterly huff and dash redeemed at the end by the wonderful late self-portraits. There were the drawings of Georg Grosz (at the Royal Academy). There were Auguste Sander's photos of "People of the 20th Century" (National Portrait Gallery), that strange, stiff portrait-series which looks like a catalogue of human life as seen from an infinite distance. No. Yes, I stand by all that. Absolutely.

And "Sensation" (RA) can't be forgotten either (but that memory is hardly a personal matter, the whole world enforced it) - for a handful of good works on top of everything else.

To close, though, with an objective fact. There's no doubt who the most exhibited artist was: William Hogarth. The centenary of his birth was marked with shows at the Tate Gallery, the Sir John Soane Museum, the Whitworth Gallery, the British Museum and the National Gallery. Never wrote about any of them, certainly saw some of them, but I can't now remember quite which.



Film of the year: Claire Danes and Leonardo DiCaprio in Baz Luhrmann's lavish and unorthodox screen adaptation of *Romeo & Juliet*

Tales of the Unexpected I, or how the Teletubbies caught our critic napping

TELEVISION
BY THOMAS SUTCLIFFE

It is one hallmark of the memorable moment that everyone will be expected to spare a moment for it - that, whatever they are doing, it should be set aside for a while to make space for this unexpected rip in the dull predictability of common experience. In terms of television viewing, one simple test is: does what you are watching give you the impulse to summon others to watch it with you?

There were several such moments in 1997 - some of them bathetic, some of them, it transpired, genuinely historic. But the strength of the impulse itself will not tell you much about the moment - in the sense of weight or seriousness - of what you are watching. If I'm honest, for example, I felt the impulse most sharply one day when I was watching review tapes at home. Coming to the end of one programme, I ejected the tape, and my VCR reverted automatically to the channel to which it was tuned. What I saw was a landscape of geometrically

perfect hills dotted with primary-colour flowers and peopled by callipygous space bears, with screens in their fleecy tummies. I watched open-mouthed for a while, dazed by the heady, almost toxic cuteness of the scene, but when a lambent sun appeared, framing the face of a chuckling baby, I had to call for help. Had I first encountered the Teletubbies after their invasion of the general cultural consciousness, I would have been more blasé and more evaluative; as it was, this was a moment when - rather like the video machine itself - the critical mind lapsed into idle and something more guileless took over.

There was a far graver occasion on which that took place - though, this time, I was the

callee, roused from sleep by the news that the Princess of Wales was dead and stumbling straight for the television to share the sense of stupefaction that the serial should have ended so abruptly. Earlier in the year, Everyman's *Diary of a Princess* had showed a woman working out how to turn media manipulation to moral ends - offering the titillation of glamour-in-danger as the posed, elegant evader in armour, in a minefield. And though there were other moments of gaping wonder in the year - Portillo grey-faced with shock at his election count, Tracey Emin staggering from the set of the Turner Prize discussion - those were moments that kept only a partisan group or a cultural cozier spellbound.

Nothing matched the news coverage of Diana's death, or the live broadcast of her funeral, for its ability to pin almost every kind of viewer to the screen. The quality of what you saw here wasn't the point - rarely can a live news broadcast have stretched so little information so far - but, as you watched, you felt part of a great, still congregation.

The best television isn't momentous in that sense: you couldn't really have shouted "See this" about any individual sequence in Tony Marchant's ambitious *Holding On* (though it had moments that have left a lasting echo in the mind) or in *I'm Alan Partridge* (easily best comedy of 1997). But while television's contingent moments will always have an immediacy that other programmes find hard to match, they shouldn't make us forget how hard it is to produce something that makes you want to watch week after week, rather than something you simply must watch right now.

Tales of the Unexpected II, or how Tom Stoppard made our critic cry

THEATRE
BY PAUL TAYLOR

How do you define a "defining moment"? I can think of several defining moments in my theatrical year, all of them based on a slightly different understanding of what the term means. If it's an "I will never be the same again after this aesthetic-cum-moral thrill", then I must give pride of place to the moment, in Richard Eyre's production of *The Invention of Love*, when I found myself watching a Stoppard play through a blur of tears. Beforehand, this would have seemed as likely as my watching a football match wide-awake.

There's a strange link between the sequence that caused this reaction and another in the same director's *King Lear*. Stoppard's play imagines an out-of-time meeting between the elderly, professorial AE Housman and his younger, undergraduate self. Soul-mates recognise each other across an aching gulf: one has the uncomfortable power of incognito over the other, whom he can only protect so far.

These are the very qualities Eyre's *Lear* so matchlessly communicated in the relationship between the disguised Edgar and the King, and the exploration of these heart-snagging affinities between two men produced the deepest theatrical pleasure of the year. Paul Rhys was the youth in both instances. Brilliant performances from Ian Holm as Lear, John Wood as the older Housman, and from the ever-amazing Judi Dench in *Amey's View*, ensured that Richard Eyre left the National on the wave of triumph he was owed.

If a "defining moment" is the point at which you make some personal discovery about the artform or at which a semi-conscious hunch ripens into some-

thing more palpable, then 1997, from where I'm sitting, has not been short of them. Caryl Churchill's superb *Blue Heart* and Complicite's staging of Ionesco's *The Chairs* taught me to look at the Theatre of the Absurd and its ludic magnificence and metaphors with new eyes. It's not the grand existential statements that matter but the essential realism of the emotions and the relationships. Katie Mitchell's wonderful staging of six Samuel Beckett shorts for the RSC reconfirmed this.

If the new-writing side of Peter Hall's tragically aborted repertory project at the Old Vic showed how a stage of that size exposes the studio-scale imagination and flimsy construction of much recent drama, the sea-

son as a whole was mighty proof of the virtues of a true acting company. Meanwhile, at the RSC Stratford, too many of the high-house Shakespeare stagings seemed to have no deeper motive than to keep the tired machine ticking over and the tills ringing. By contrast, at the Swan, Laurence Boswell's Notting Hill Carnival take on Ben Jonson's *Barnholme Fair* was the year's best example of how to bring a difficult classic alive.

Meanwhile, the Government behaves as if theatre occupies roughly the same place in its affections as single mothers. The old "spread a little unhappiness" policy, whereby everyone got a share of the misery, has been switched by the London Arts Board to one of selective murder. The Gate, the King's Head and the Greenwich theatres are in the balance. If only there were a culture minister prepared to think the unthinkable: that the arts are not a mere adjunct to life but one of the main reasons life is worth living.

Bittersweet harvest of a year that was OK for computers, but bad for Britpop

POP
BY ANDREW MUELLER

If the music of 1997 was characterised by anything, it was a failure to be characterised by anything. The Britpop bandwagon that had been knocking down pretty much everything in its path for the previous three years finally ran into a ditch, leaving its erstwhile passengers to fend for themselves. Some (ie Blur, whose eponymous album was a glorious reinvention) coped better than others (ie just about everyone else ever associated with the *Zeligist* Blur ignited in the first place). In 1997, there were no defining themes, no resound-

ing moments, although endless acres of print and vast clouds of airtime were devoted to trying to confer immortality on either or both of The Spice Girls and Oasis. The Spices released a second album and a film, cracked America, and managed to establish themselves as world-famous sex symbols, vocalists, actors and songsmiths, which isn't bad going for five ordinary-looking people who can't sing, dance, act or write terribly well. The little kudos they do deserve is getting away, almost unnoticed, with one of the most bewildering lyrics

ever to reach No 1. The thunderously annoying "Spice Up Your Life" squawked something about "Yellow man in Timbuktu". Given that Timbuktu is situated in Mali, in the southern Sahara, it's a fair bet that the only yellow men in the vicinity are those with jaundice. Oasis, who also know a thing or two about the baffling couplet, released their third album, *Be Here Now*. Despite blanket acclaim from a music press cowed into submission by Oasis's unprecedented dominance, it was a crashingly dull record. Oasis's disaffected

cheer-squad largely transferred their affections to The Verve, whose *Urban Hymns* spawned two jukebox anthems ("The Drugs Don't Work" and "Bittersweet Symphony"). Verve frontman Richard Ashcroft sometimes sounds like he's trying a bit hard in his efforts to become a sort of post-mod-

ern Gram Parsons, but at least he's trying, and also recognises that even a guitar-led British pop group should look further for inspiration than other guitar-led British pop groups. Which leads us nicely to Radiohead, Radiohead's 1995 album, *The Bends*, was any sane judge's best of that year, and

this year's *OK Computer* saw the Oxford-based quintet well on the way to a hat-trick. What Radiohead accomplished with *OK Computer* - which was, to be crassly reductive, a combination of the splenic fury of Elvis Costello's *Blood & Chocolate* with the cinematic sweep of U2's *The Unforgettable Fire* - should be admired as long as people buy pop music. Their live shows confirmed the view that they're the act everyone else is trying to follow - inventive yet accessible, scathingly yet compassionate. It seems unlikely that

American audiences will take to *OK Computer* as ravenously as they took to Radiohead's early single "Creep". In another unremittably dismal year for American music - aside from oddities such as Ben Folds Five and Eels, and the mostly brilliant hip-hop delinquents Wu-Tang Clan - Americans took instead to British dance. The Prodigy topped the Billboard charts. The Chemical Brothers weren't far off, and a degree of success was enjoyed by Republica, despite their uncanny resemblance to Transvision Vamp, minus the jokes.

Despite the absence of an invigorating sense that anything definite was going on, 1997 yielded a rich harvest of terrific records. For what it's worth, then, the 10 albums of this year that this listener would take on a voyage to find somebody yellow in Timbuktu are: *OK Computer*; Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds' *The Boatman's Call*; Kenickie's *At The Club*; U2's *Pop*; Geneva's *Further*; Sixteen Horsepower's *Low Estate*; Wu-Tang Clan's *Wu-Tang Forever*; Blur's *Blur*; Eels' *Beautiful Freak*; and Prefab Sprout's *Andromeda Heights*.

14/SALES GUIDE

And now it's time to buy yourself a present

Today sees the start of the sale season, reckoned by many to offer the best bargains for years. Our fashion writer **Melanie Rickey** selects some of the best.

Designer and boutiques

A La Mode, 36 Hans Crescent, London SW1. Sale from tomorrow to 10 Jan with 50-80 per cent off Missoni, Mani, Marine Sthob, Colette Dinigan and Matthew Williamson. Mani black leather coat was £1,560, now £750, Matthew Williamson embroidered ruffle dress was £499, now £225.

Aquascutum, 100 Regent St, London W1. 0800-282-922. Winter sale now on until 31 Jan with discounts on womenswear, menswear and accessories. Men's suits from £425 to £295, women's 100 per cent wool jacket, was £350 now £225.

Brother to Brother, 202 West Street, Sheffield, 0114 2754 296. Sale begins tomorrow with 30-50 per cent off menswear labels including Dirk Bikkembergs, Helmut Lang Jeans and mainline, Evisu Jeans, Copperbeet Blundell, 6876 and Griffin.

Browns, 23-27 South Molton St, London W1, 0171 491 7833. Sale begins 3 Jan, reductions up to 50 per cent on labels including Jil Sander, Gaultier, Tocco, Demeulemeester & Lucien Pellat-Finot.

Browns Focus, 38-39 South Molton St, London W1, 0171 639 0666. Sale begins 3 Jan, reductions up to 40 per cent on labels including Stella McCartney, Maharishi, Evisu, & Helmut Lang Jeans.

Butler & Wilson, 20 South Molton Street, London W1. Sale starts tomorrow, up to 50 per cent on selected items including mock jet brooches and necklaces. Not in Fulham Road branch.

Carter, 11 Upper Queen Street, Belfast, 01232 243 412. Women's section sale begins tomorrow, men's section sale begins 1 Jan, good discounts on labels including Joop, Armani and Donna Karan.

Comme des Garçons, 59 Brook St, London W1, 0171 493 1258. Sale now on, reductions up to 40 per cent on current stock.

Cruise Flannels, Birmingham (0121 633 4154), Nottingham (01159 476 466) and Newcastle-upon-Tyne, (0191 261 0510). Sale starts tomorrow with 30-50 per cent off labels including Joseph, Prada, Ralph Lauren, and Henri Lloyd.

Dolce & Gabbana, 175 Sloane Street, London SW1. Sale begins tomorrow with 40 per cent off current stock. Best buys include pale blue coat dress with appliquéd flower detail.

Dexter Wong, 17 Monmouth St, London WC2. 0171-284-0752. Sale begins 2 Jan with 20 per cent off womenswear, menswear and accessories.

DKNY, 27 Old Bond Street, London W1. Sale begins tomorrow with reductions starting at 20 per cent on current stock.

Donna Karan, 19, New Bond St, London W1, 0171-495-3100. Sale begins tomorrow with reductions starting at 20 per cent on current stock.

Emporio Armani, 191 Brompton Road, London, 0171 323 8818. Sale begins tomorrow with up to 30 per cent off current stock.

Flannels, Altrincham, Leeds and Manchester, enqs: 0161 237 9945. Sale starts tomorrow with 20-50 per cent discounts on men's and women's designer labels including Thierry Mugler, Jil Sander, Gucci, D&G and Armani.

Georgina von Etzdorf, 50 Burlington Arcade, London W1. Customers' preview 2-3



Sale of the century: many shops began discounting before Christmas to lure in reluctant shoppers

Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

Jan, then from 4 Jan 30-40 per cent off stock. Best buys include velvet devoré scarves down from £180 to £99, velvet bouclé jacket down from £825 to £495.

Ghost, 13-14 Hinde St, London W1 and 36 Ledbury Road, London W1. Sale begins 29 Dec with 30 per cent and more off current stock. Best buys include satin sheath dress down from £145 to £99.

Giorgio Armani, 37 Sloane Street, London SW1, sale begins tomorrow with discounts on all stock.

Giulio, 26-32 King Street, Cambridge, CB1, 01223 316 100.

Sale begins 3 Jan with 25-50 per cent off men's and women's designer wear including Hammett, Helmut Lang and Costume Homme.

Gina Shoes, 189 Sloane St, London SW2, 0171 235 2932. Sale began on 21 Dec with reductions on shoes such as snake-skin strap high-heels from £225 to £139 and stretch polynesian knee-high boots from £450 to £295.

Gucci, 33 Old Bond Street, London W1, sale begins on 1 Jan.

Hermès, 155 New Bond St.

London W1 and 179 Sloane St, SW1. Sale begins 3 Jan until 10 Jan with 40 per cent off spring/summer 97 stock and 60 per cent off autumn/winter 96 stock, reductions apply to ready-to-wear and ladies shoes only. **Issey Miyake**, 271 Brompton Rd, London SW3, 0171-581-3760. Sale starts tomorrow with 30 per cent reductions on autumn/winter stock. Purple prism dress, was £1,900, now £1,330.

Jones, 15 Floral Street (designer) and 13 Floral Street (street), London 0171 240 8312. Sale begins 2 Jan, discounts start at 30 per cent, best buys include mens D&G suit from £435 to £318 and Bikkembergs hooded jacket from £345 to £240.

Joseph, 77 Fulham Rd, London SW3, 26 Sloane St, SW1, 23 Old Bond St, W1. Sale begins tomorrow with 30 per cent off Joseph own label and designer labels. Best buys include winter coats and leather pieces.

Joseph Azagury, 73 Knightsbridge, London SW3, 0171-254-6887. Sale begins 7 Jan with up to 40 per cent off selected autumn/winter styles such as high-heeled platform ankle boots reduced from £200 to £130.

Kit Mens and Womenswear, 12 Silver Walk, St Martins Sq, Leicester, 0116 2529 605. Sale begins 3 Jan with 30-50 per cent off Dexter Wong, D Squared, Exe, W< and Versus.

Koh Samut, 16 Monmouth Street, London WC2, 0171-240-4280. Sale starts tomorrow with up to 60 per cent reductions on designers including Copperwheat Blundell, Ahe Hamilton, Christa Davis and David Purves. Clements Ribeiro black sequinned silk chiffon bias-cut dress reduced from £620 to £395.

Le Monde Menswear, 305 Tottenhall Road, Newbridge, Wolverhampton WV6 and 55 Victoria Street, Wolverhampton WV1. Sale starts 5 January with 30-50 per cent off menswear labels including R Newbold, Camper and Rockport.

Life, Birmingham (0121 633 0792), Manchester and Leeds (enqs: 0161 237 9945). Sale starts first week in Jan with good reductions on sportswear brands including Tommy Hilfiger, Polo Ralph Lauren, Henri Lloyd and Schott.

Manhattan, 242 High Street, Slough, Berks, 01753 537 820. Sale begins on 3 Jan with good discounts on menswear from Henri Lloyd, Lacoste and Calvin Klein.

Manolo Blahnik, 49 Old Church Street, London SW3. Sale begins 9 January with 45 per cent off winter stock and 50-60 per cent off previous collections. Best buys include Antonio Berardi "coursel"

mules from £270 to £150, and Cerruti high-cut shoes/boots from £365 to £200.

Margaret Howell, 29 Beauchamp Place, London SW3, 24 Brook Street W1, 0171-584-2462. Sale begins tomorrow with discounts from 30 per cent on current stock. Best buys include bullcreek cardigan from £169 to £129.

Matches, 34, 37, 38-41 High St, Wimbledon Village, London SW19 and 13 Hill Street, Richmond, enqs: 0181 946 2540. Sale begins tomorrow until 25 Jan with discounts between 30 and 60 per cent on designer stock including Prada and Patrick Cox.

Max Mara, 32 Sloane Street, London SW1 and 153 New Bond Street. Sale begins tomorrow with discounts of 20-45 per cent on stock. The New Bond Street store closes on 6 Jan for refurbishment.

Michael Chell, Windsor (01753 862 589), Maidenhead (01628 672610), and Camberley (01276 676735). Sale starts tomorrow at all branches with discounts on menswear labels including Kenzo, Hugo Boss and Paul Smith.

Mulberry, 41-42 New Bond St, London W1, 11-12 Gues Court, W1. Sale begins tomorrow with up to 50 per cent off selected stock. Best buys include half-price luggage and a velvet halter-neck dress from £415 to £279.

Nicole Farhi, 11 Floral Street, London WC2, 158 New Bond St, W1, 193 Sloane Street. Sale now on with up to 30 per cent off stock. Best buys include winter coats.

Osprey, London W1, 0171-935-2824. Sale now on until end of January, 50-70 per cent off selected items.

Patrick Cox, 30 Sloane St, London SW1, 0171-235-5599. Sale begins tomorrow with reductions of up to 30 per cent off winter stock including lace-up knee-high boot with kitten heel from £335 to £234.

Paul Smith, 14-44 Floral St, London WC2 and nationwide, enqs: 0171-379-7133. Sale begins 3 Jan for four weeks with 30-50 per cent discounts on all collections.

Pellicano, 63 South Molton Street, London W1, 0171 629 2205. Sale begins tomorrow with 30 per cent off this season's stock including CB, Joelynian, Eric Berger, Miu Miu, and Antonio Berardi. Bargains include brown cropped sheepskin jacket by Miu Miu from £1,200 to £450, Antonio Berardi grey mini kilt from £260 to £180.

Polo Ralph Lauren, 143 New Bond Street, London W1. Sale begins mid-Jan with 30-50 per cent off all winter stock.

Prada, 42-45 Sloane Street, SW1, 0171 235 0008. Sale begins 29 Dec with 20-50 per cent discount on all stock of menswear and womenswear, shoes and accessories.

The Designerwear Showroom, 17 Riding House Street, London W1, 0171 436 3175. Sale now on with 30-50 per cent off menswear labels including Armani, Moschino and Versace.

Saks Manshop, Shamrock Quay, Southampton, 01703 637 892. Sale starts on 9 Jan with up to 50 per cent off menswear by Armani, Boss, Cerruti, Versace and Stone Island.

The Field, Reading (01734 590 810), Wokingham (01734 787872) and Henley (01491 414144). Sale starts 2 Jan with good discounts on menswear labels including Hugo Boss, Issey Miyake and Polo Ralph Lauren.

Repertoire, Beaconsfield (01494 681655), Marlow (01628 476 996) and Watford (01923 235445). Sale starts tomorrow with good discounts on menswear labels including Iceberg, Victor Victoria, Nicole Farhi and John Rocha.

Robert Old & Co, 20-21 Westover Road, Bournemouth (01202 280832). Sale starts 8 Jan with 30-50 per cent off Ermengildo Zegna, Versace Classic V2 and Iceberg.

View, 17 Hill Street, Richmond, Surrey, 0181 332 2726. Sale now on with discounts on men's and women's labels including Basi, Schott, Thomas Burberry and Jasper Conran.

Wade Smith, fashion store for men and women, Matthew Street, Cavern Quarter, Active Woman, Whitechapel and Wade Smith Junior, Paradise Street, all Liverpool, call 0151 255 0177. Sale starts tomorrow with 30-50 per cent off designer labels for men, women and children including Dolce & Gabbana, DKNY, Guess? and Victor Victoria.

Whistles, 12 St. Christopher's Place, London W1 and nationwide, enqs: 0171 487 4484. Sale now on with 20-50 per cent reductions on all items including wool stretch one-button jacket, was £235, now £164; matching skirt, was £110, now £55; stretch velvet bootleg pants, down from £115 to £92; stretch paisley shirt, was £115, now £57.

Woodies Emporium, 22-26 Morgan Arcade, Cardiff (01222 232171) and 16 The Triangle, Bristol (01179 292 519). Sale starts 22 Jan with 30-50 per cent off men's designer labels and accessories including Firetrap, Calvin Klein, Fred Perry, Full Circle, G-Shock and Napapijri.

Valentino, 174 Sloane Street, London SW1; 160 New Bond Street, W1, 0171 235 5855.

Sale now on with 40 per cent off current stock and up to 60 per cent on previous collections. Best buy tiger-print coat, £1,820, narrow pants and embroidered top, £1,630.

Vivienne Westwood, men's accessories and Red Label, 45 Conduit Street, London W1. Gold Label: 6 Davies Street, W1. Sale starts 5 Jan with 30 per cent off all winter stock.

Xile, Unit 22, Waverley Market, Princes Street, Edinburgh, 0131 556 6508. Sale starts today with discounts on mens and womenswear starting at 20 per cent on selected items including Duffer, Diesel, Limehaus, Comme des Garçons and Dolce & Gabbana.

Yves Saint Laurent, Rive Gauche Men and Women, 33 Sloane St, London SW1 and 137, New Bond St, W1, 0171-493-2143. Sale begins tomorrow with 30-50 per cent off all winter stock. Men's single-breasted pinstripe suit, was £750, now £375, women's wool knitted bootleg trousers, down from £395 to £235.

High Street and Miscellaneous

Biba, 18 Piccadilly Arcade, Jermyn St, London SW1, 0171-359-3699. Sale now on for one month with 50 per cent off winter stock. Rainbow velvet coat is reduced from £160 to £80.

Burberry, 18-22 Haymarket, London SW1, 165 Regent St, London W1, 0171 734 5979. Sale begins tomorrow for three weeks with 30-50 per cent off stock. Best buys include classic men's trenchcoat from £625 to £395.

Cobra Sports, nationwide, enqs: 0181 847 4616. Sale begins tomorrow for three weeks with up to 50 per cent reductions on all major sports brands. Nike Air Triax from £79.99 to £49.99.

Ciro Pearls, 61, Brompton Road, London SW3, 0171589 5584. Sale begins 29 Dec with 50 per cent reductions on selected items of costume jewellery and 25 per cent off any existing sale items.

Clarks, branches nationwide, enqs: 0171371 9011. Sale now on until end of Jan with up to £15 discount on casual shoes and boots.

Country Casuals, branches nationwide, enqs: 0171 281 5181. Sale now on with discounts of up to 50 per cent on casualwear, soft tailoring, winter knitwear and accessories.

Diesel, 55 Neal Street, London WC2, enqs: 0171 632 2255. Sale begins tomorrow until 17 January with 30-50 per cent off all fashion items from the men's, women's and children's ranges, doesn't include denim.

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15/SALES GUIDE

Buffer of St. George. 29 Shorts Gardens, London WC2, 0171-379 4660. Sale begins 10 Jan with 20-50 per cent off. Own label fleeces, down from £85 to £65, original Cowboy chunky cardigans from £200 to £99.

East & East Additions. branches nationwide, enqs: 0181-877 0807. Sale starts tomorrow until mid-Jan with up to 50 per cent off all stock including handknit cardigans and velvet shirts.

Egg. 36, Kinnerton St, London SW1, 0171-235 9315. Sale begins in the first week of Feb for two weeks with 30-50 per cent off selected items.

Faith. nationwide, enqs: 0800-289297. Sale began 20 Dec, offering up to 50 per cent on selected footwear and bags.

Favourbrook. men's: 55 Jermyn Street, London SW1; waistcoats and accessories: 19-21 Piccadilly Arcade, SW1; women's: 18 Piccadilly Arcade, enqs: 0171-491 2337. Sale starts tomorrow until 31 Jan with 10 per cent off all women's and men's jackets, trousers and accessories and up to 50 per cent off waistcoats, which start at £120.

French Connection. branches nationwide, enqs: 0171-580 2507. Sale begins tomorrow with 30 per cent off all items

from men's and women's collections. Best buys include women's double-breasted maxi coat from £200 to £140.

French & Teague/1647. 69 Gloucester Ave, London NW1. Sale begins 2 Jan, with 30-50 per cent off current stock. Dupion silk reversible bronze/indigo opera coat, was £700, will be £400.

Gap. stores nationwide, enqs: 0800 427789. No sale as such but many items will be marked down on sale rails from tomorrow.

Gieves & Hawkes. 1 Savile Row, London W1, enqs: 0171-434 2001. Sale begins tomorrow until end of Jan in all stores. Best buys include blazers from £295 to £195, and suits from £495 to £295.

H&M Hennes. London, Leeds, Norwich and Birmingham, for local shop call 0171 255 2031. Sale now on.

Jeffrey Rogers. enqs: (01923) 474 400. Sale begins tomorrow with price cuts of 30-75 per cent on all stock. Best buys include assorted knitwear from £29.99 to £6.99 and jackets from £64.99 to £29.99.

Jigsaw. 43 branches nationwide, enqs: 0171-491 4484. Sale starts 7 Jan with discounts from 30 per cent on winter clothes.

John Lobb. 88 Jermyn St, London W1, 179 Sloane St, SW1. Sale begins 29 Dec with 30-50 per cent off a selection of traditional men's shoes. Best buys include classic brogues from £375 to £195 and boots from £420 to £255.

Karen Millen. branches nationwide, enqs: (01622) 664032. Sale starts tomorrow with 30-50 per cent off selected lines.

Kookai. enqs: 0171-937 4411. Sale begins tomorrow with discounts of up to 50 per cent. Best buys include double-



Polo Ralph Lauren, above left, and woman at Next, above right



breasted reefer-style coat from £160 to £69.

Next. nationwide. Sale begins tomorrow with up to 50 per cent off all autumn/winter stock.

Oasis. nationwide. Sale begins tomorrow with up to 50 per cent off selected stock. Best buys include stretch velvet hipsters, originally £44.99, now £24.99. Final reductions will be on 29 Jan.

Office. branches across London, 0181-836 0070. Sale begins 2 Jan with reductions of up to 50 per cent on brands including Hush Puppy, Merrell, Napapijri, and Costume National.

Offspring. Neal St, London WC2. Sale begins 2 Jan with up to 50 per cent off sports brands.

Quiset. 0171-255 5300. Sale starts today for one month, with discounts of up to 50 per cent.

Red Or Dead. enqs: 0114-723 7827. Sale begins tomorrow

with up to 50 per cent reductions on everything.

The Scotch House. London and Edinburgh, enqs: 0171-581 2151. Sale starts tomorrow for three weeks with 30-40 per cent reductions on all stock including ladies' cashmere roll-neck sweater from £165 to £125.

Wallis. branches nationwide, enqs: 0181-910 1333. Sale now on with up to 50 per cent off womenswear and accessories.

Windsmoor. branches nationwide, enqs: 0181-800 8022. Sale begins tomorrow.

Woodhouse. London and Manchester, enqs: 0171-629 1254. Sale now on with 20-30 per cent off menswear labels including Woodhouse own label, Stone Island and Armani.

Department Stores

Alders. The Whitgift Centre, Croydon, Surrey. Sale starts today, with 30-50 per cent discounts in all departments.

Army & Navy. Victoria, London SW1, 0171-834 1234. Sale begins tomorrow with discounts from 20-50 per cent in all departments.

Barkers. Kensington High Street, London W8, 0171-937 5432. Sale begins tomorrow with discounts from 20-50 per cent in all departments.

Bhs. nationwide, enqs: 0171-262-3388. Sale commences today until 19 Jan with up to 50 per cent off selected items.

Debenhams. branches nationwide, sale begins tomorrow with 30-50 per cent off selected items.

DH Evans. Oxford Street, London W1, 0171-629 8800. Sale begins tomorrow with 20-50 per cent off selected items.

Dickins & Jones. Regent St, London W1. Sale begins tomorrow with discounts and special offers in menswear, womenswear and childrenswear departments.

Fortnum & Mason. 181 Pica-

dilly, London W1. Sale starts 30 Dec with discounts from 25-50 per cent off selected items from men's, women's, children's and gift sections. Food items are not on sale.

Fenwick's. New Bond Street, London W1, 0171-629 9161. Sale begins tomorrow with 30-50 per cent off current stock including Jasper Conran evening dress from £249 to £125 and Kenzo man's suit from £399 to £279.

Harrods. Knightsbridge, London SW1, 0171-730 1234. Sale begins at 9am on 7 Jan and continues until 31 Jan across all departments. Womenswear collections offer up to 50 per cent off labels such as Prada. Best buys: grey woollen skin-ny-rib top from £204 to £140 and discounts on Helmut Lang menswear, single-breasted suit from £829 to £579.

Harvey Nichols. Knightsbridge, London SW1, 0171-235 5000. Sale begins tomorrow with up to 50 per cent off items in all departments. Bargains include Dolce & Gabbana men's cashmere jumper from £365 to £182 and women's Galliano ruffle dress from £1,025 to £512.

House of Fraser. sale starts today in Scotland and continues until 24 Jan; in England and Wales sale begins tomorrow, until 24 Jan, with 20-50 per cent off selected items.

John Lewis department stores. nationwide, enqs: 0171-828 1000. Clearance sale begins 29 Dec with bargains available in all departments, womenswear sale items include 100 per cent wool jackets reduced from £95 to £65 and classic merino knitwear from £25 to £15.

Liberty. Regent Street, London, W1, 0171-734 1234. Sale begins tomorrow with up to 50 per cent off throughout all departments, reductions in women's fashion include Nicole Farhi tunic from £149 to £74.50

and menswear Ralph Lauren polo shirts from £60 to £35.

Marks & Spencer. on sale nationwide from tomorrow with 30 per cent discounts on all end-of-season stock.

Selfridges. 400 Oxford Street, London W1, enqs: 0171-318 3562. Sale begins tomorrow with reductions throughout the store, with discounts of up to 50 per cent in men's and women's fashions, such as Katherine Hamnett velvet wrap coat reduced from £539 to £299.

Miscellaneous

Aero. 96 Westbourne Grove, London W2, enqs: 0171-221 950. Sale begins 3 Jan until 1 Feb, discounts of up to 30 per cent off furniture, lighting and accessories for the home.

The Body Shop. nationwide, enqs: 01903 731 500. A good buy is White Musk Eau de Toilette, reduced by 50 per cent.

B&Q. branches nationwide, enqs: 0171-465 7700. Sale begins tomorrow until 8 Feb, reductions in all departments with best buys in kitchens, tiling and interiors departments.

Courts. branches nationwide, enqs: 0181-640 3322. Sale begins tomorrow, with up to 50 per cent reductions on selected three-piece suites.

Habitat. branches nationwide, enqs: 0171-255 2545. Sale from tomorrow to 25 January, reductions on upholstery, furniture, lighting, decoration and bedlinen, best buys on sofa beds.

Heal's. branches in London and Guildford, enqs: 0171-636 1666. Sale from tomorrow to 18 Jan. Reductions in all departments, up to 50 per cent off some discontinued lines and 15 per cent off selected ranges of furniture, upholstery and beds.

HMV. 150 Oxford Street, London W1, 0171-631 3423. Sale from tomorrow to mid-January, albums from £9.99, videos from £8.99.

Ikea. branches nationwide, enqs: 0181-208 5600. Sale from tomorrow to 18 Jan, reductions in many departments, including 40 per cent off Jussi dining table in white and Mira beds.

Mutberry Hall. Stonegate, York, and mail order, (01904) 620736. Reductions in all departments, good buys on Spode Bordeaux dinner sets and Stuart crystal.

MFI. nationwide, enqs: 0990 634634. Sale from today to 31 Jan, reductions on beds and upholstery, up to 50 per cent off fitted kitchens and bedrooms.

Purves & Purves. enqs: 0171-580 8223. Sale starts 27 Dec for three weeks, with 10 per cent off British and international furniture above £500.

Tower Records. One Piccadilly, London W1, 0171-439 2500. Sale from 31 Dec to 26 Jan, with reductions on books, CDs, tapes and accessories.

WH Smith. branches nationwide. Sale from tomorrow, reductions on music, videos and stationary. Up to 50 per cent off some gift ranges and Christmas products.



Man at Next

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IT'S WORTH LIVING IN LONDON SELFRIDGES & CO

It was the noisiest selling line of the year, and the most successful. But is there such a power? What does it mean? And did Spice advance the cause? Interviews by Nicole Veash and Xenia Gregoriadis.



Jilly Cooper, bestselling novelist

The Spice Girls are fun and harmless and I wish good luck to them but "girl power", it really means nothing to me. That's not to say that I warmed to 1970s feminism. Absolutely not. That was all about defeminisation, it was anti-glamour, anti-make-up. They grew the hair on their legs and under their armpits and they even burned their bras. To that respect I think the Spice Girls are far more healthy because they say people can look attractive if they want. Something beautiful should be allowed to be beautiful if it wants to be. My idea of womanhood is embodied by Joanna Lumley. Jo is perfect and so good. She runs around doing everything for everybody. She's wonderful beauty and charm. She's very clever, she makes wonderful television programmes, she's the best thing ever. She's kind, intelligent, sweet and warm. She's got a wonderful sense of humour and does so much for charity - and she looks absolutely stunning for her age. And that is real girl power.

John Lyttle, Independent gay columnist

Girl power definitely means something to me. I've only got to look at my five-year-old niece, who kicks her elder brothers and says "girl power" while she does it. That cheers me up immensely.

If a boy hits her she will hit him back with one of her dolls. Once a little boy showed her his peepee and said: "I've got a peepee and you haven't!" and she said: "I've got a ponytail and you haven't!"

Girls are definitely running the show. They are not timid and they have a real sense of themselves and their gender at the age of five, which is a great thing. So there has definitely been a cultural shift.

The Spice Girls are pop culture's manifestation of feminism. It is a way of making financial gains out of the ideas of feminism. I'm not totally keen on that because it is just another form of exploitation. My idea of girl power is Sharon Stone in *Basic Instinct*. I think every little girl should be given an ice pick at birth.

The girl power thing goes a lot deeper than the Spice Girls and marketing hype. There is a change in atmosphere and that has been a long time in coming. We won't see the real benefits for another 10-15 years. And God help the man who asks my niece out when she's in her 20s.

Joan Smith, Independent on Sunday columnist

Girl power is a cheap and silly way of describing a real change in women's lives, but it has been refracted and distorted through the mirror of popular culture. The great campaigns of the 1960s and 1970s have come to fruition today. Younger women don't face the same prejudice that my generation faced when we grew up. They are much more confident that I was at that age. But then they are not politicised like we were. When I was 10 I was being discriminated against because of my gender and this made me a lot more aware of the struggle to get equality.

Although things are a lot better now there are still battles to be won, like women getting into the higher echelons of all sides of life. I wonder how they cope when they are 30 and they hit the glass ceiling. Today women grow up with the assumption that everything is equal, so it may come as a real shock.

When girls behave badly they are showing that not only men can fill that sort of role. It is a sign of barriers being broken down. They probably think feminism is outdated and they may wonder why people like



Girl Power: just slogan spice or is it really happening?

me still hang on about sex discrimination. The Spice Girls have taken a real historical change and packaged it in the blandest of ways. Underneath all those layers of marketing you can see something of real significance.



Chris Eubank, former world champion boxer

I believe in equality all the way. But there's not enough around. To impregnate the subconscious of girls or women with the attitude that you have got power is a very good thing. Success is all about confidence. If the Spice Girls or any type of fad can give a woman even a superficial belief or inspiration in herself then that's fantastic and I'm all for it.

Girl power is a fantastic thing but then so is boy power, general power. I suppose that girls need it a bit more than boys because the rhythm of things in our society means that the female is somehow made to feel a little bit lesser than the male.

The Spice Girls are using what they have. I use my fists. They look good, so they use their sex appeal and their voices. It's a good lesson to use what you have to become powerful.

Power can be manifested in hundreds of different ways. It can be subtle. It can be aggressive. The singer Gabrielle is powerful in the sweetness of her voice and music. She may not be aggressive outwardly but the way she deposits herself is powerfully solid. She is very feminine.

Girl and boy power comes from inner strength and humility. Greatness is humility. Girls need to find a trade, find a subject, get an education and be strong in what they know.

Just look at Margaret Thatcher. The fact that she's a woman made no difference to her position. It takes intellect to get to her position. She was powerful because she knew how to be successful in her particular trade.

Suzanne Moore, Independent commentator

The Spice Girls have just reinforced a mood that has been around for some time.

These days young girls have a lot of loyalty towards each other.

There is definitely a girl power thing around at the moment. Girls are doing better than boys at school and they are in demand in the workplace. They don't accept that anything is boys only. They play football, they ask boys out and they do it with a lot of confidence. They think nothing is going to be denied to them on the grounds of their gender. They tend to stick together and don't dump one another for boys. But this mood has been growing for a while. The Spice Girls just used some clever marketing to catch on to this.



Blake Morrison, poet and writer

It's a real pity that the girl power phenomenon has been attached to the Spice Girls, because it reduces it to just a pop slogan with no real substance. However, young women are definitely more confident than their mothers were. But I prefer to look at it as women power. Women are everywhere now. I have a female publisher and a female agent and I sometimes work for a female editor, so there has definitely been a real shift. In the 1970s women would never have been in any position of influence, but in many sections of society this has changed for good.

I don't like that aggressive, noisy side of girl power. I've never liked men getting rowdy and going to pubs, so I don't see why I should like women doing the same. I suppose that is an inevitable part of egalitarianism, but that's not where real power for women lies.

If men see women behave like that, they inevitably fall back on old prejudices about women being slags. Real power is economic power and freedom from domesticity. Women shouldn't have to be superwomen. Going to the pub is not liberation and it just reinforces those old prejudicial stereotypes.

Elizabeth Beresford, creator of Alderney Womble, the newest addition to The Womble family

The Wombles are creatures that live on Wimbledon Common and spend their time clearing rubbish from the land. This womble was created for the little

boys and girls that live on Alderney in the Channel Islands where I live. They are so cut off that some of them have never seen a double decker bus or even an elevator. When I first wrote the series in the early 1970s, the only female womble was Madame Chole. But there was a real need for another younger girl womble, who is less matriarchal and traditional than she is.

Alderney is a very modern girl Womble. She's very different from Madame Chole. She goes around on a skateboard and she doesn't take herself too seriously. She does the same things as the male Wombles. Madame Chole still stays at home and makes clover huns, but Alderney is out there working hard with the other Wombles tidying up Wimbledon Common.

She is very confident, so I suppose she has been influenced by girl power. She has got two bunches on top of her hat which stick right up, like the Spice Girls, but they are a bit past it now, aren't they?

Professor Roger Scruton, philosopher

It is always hard to say whether girl power or the Spice Girls will have any lasting impact on our culture. But one thing is incredible.

Just think about a group of girls pulling faces and sticking their tongues out with such insolence and then think about the plaudits they received afterwards. They were courted by Blair and Major and they were called amazing just because they were so yobish.

It is amazing to think that a nation watched them and this has got to have a significant political and historical impact on our culture in the long run. It shows that if you are insolent and you are attractive - which applies to very few people - then you can make an impact on the most important people of the day. Can you imagine Gladstone or Disraeli fooling around with a bunch of girls like that?

Jeremy Isaacs, former head of Channel 4 and the Royal Opera House

I have always been in favour of giving talented women responsibility. In the mid-1970s when I was director of programmes for Thames television I advanced Verity Lambert up the career ladder then I hired Liz Forgan when I set up Channel 4 in 1980. But I find the Spice Girls absolutely terrifying. My four-year-old granddaughter had a birthday party recently and she and her friends were popping all over the place making a terrible racket. I just had to run away and hide.

Sadie Plant, cyberfeminist

There's a lot of marketing hype and harshness around girl power. But having said that something new has become clear during the past year. There is a confidence among young women, for example girls are doing better than boys at school. The Spice Girls have picked up on these sentiments, but it is difficult to separate this pop phenomenon from tendencies of real significance.

Girl power is different from 1970s feminism. Instead of saying women are starting from a disadvantaged point, young girls grow up with brash self-confidence.

There is definitely an increased lack of respect for old taboos. Like the way girls and young women should be demure or non-aggressive, which I think is a good thing.

In my generation, these taboos were broken self-consciously, whereas young women today are not even aware of them. I don't know whether girl power will be remembered. It is certainly not a movement, because the days of movements and campaigns are all over.

Some of the most advanced things on the net have been done by women. They are moving away from a typically masculine way of doing things and are

exercising power on their terms.

A lot of features on the net are more suited to the way women work. For example, on the net you can assume a lot of different personas and women are quite used to doing this. They are mothers, wives and daughters. It's also like putting make-up on and changing your appearance.

The net is also a bit like a horizontal gossip network, without the constraints of older, hierarchical methods of communication.



Norman Rosenthal, exhibitions secretary of the Royal Academy

I recently interviewed four women and four men for a job. All the women were really confident and all the men looked self-defeated, which I found extraordinary.

Twenty years ago there seemed to be fewer women of any merit who seemed to make real art. Of course there have always been female artists of distinction but they are the exception. I have been criticised for not including women artists in exhibitions. It wasn't that I didn't want any, it was just that they appeared to me, by and large, not to have the strength of male artists, particularly in the early 1980s.

Since the 1980s they have found a way of standing up to men and of being noticed. Now they are greatly valued because they have broken into visual arts in a strong way and there is nothing between them and their male counterparts. For example, Rachel Whiteread and Damien Hirst are probably the most representative artists of their generation in Britain. And they just happen to be a man and a woman.



Yvette Cooper, Labour MP

I was visiting a class in my Pontefract constituency and the teacher told me that 60 per cent of the girls had achieved five or more grades A-C at GCSE, while just 30 per cent of boys had achieved the same grades. That is a shocking discrepancy. The girls I meet are a lot more confident, while the boys are generally withdrawn and spend their time playing pool.

I think it is wonderful for girls to have more confidence and be more assertive than they were 10 or 20 years ago. But at the same time I am worried about the boys, because they seem to be seriously underachieving.

But the Spice Girls are about something different. They have communicated with the under-sevens and given them real confidence which of course is a good thing. But they also have an aggressive, grabbing side, which I don't like.

The older girls have been influenced by some kind of different generational change. They have stepped on the shoulders of their mothers. But the younger girls have been affected by something different, the sentiment expressed by the Spice Girls.

On balance I don't think girl power indicates any great corner has been turned. It is just a generational thing that was bound to happen when you look at what has come before.



Vanessa Redgrave, actress

Look, there are much more significant things to life than this ridiculous girl-power thing. At the moment I'm writing something extremely important about asylum which could actually help people and I can't dedicate my mind to thinking about girl power.

Lara Croft, Tomb Raider heroine

Being an adventurer I have to be very confident. If anybody stands in the way of my career I will definitely deal with them. I am very single-minded and independent and I suppose a lot of girls can identify with that.

I can be quite aggressive, but I still retain my feminine charms. I would always show my legs. Of course I am aware of the Spice Girls. Some people have called me Digital Spice. Sure I've got the same confidence they have, but I'm definitely not such an attention seeker.

THE MEANINGS OF CHRISTMAS

The Old Testament and the New tell a single story. God, as creator and as redeemer, has a unified plan, says Margaret Atkins.

"There was weeping at the death of Jacob, but there was joy at the death of Stephen." Thus wrote John, an eighth-century monk from Damascus. Today, the Church celebrates the death of St Stephen, the first Christian martyr, the early Christians themselves called it his "birthday". For the patriarchs of the Old Testament, death was an occasion for grief, but the followers of this new age are to rejoice when the saints die.

John Damascus recognised the paradox. He wanted to startle his readers into sharing his own overwhelming awareness of the cosmic transfiguration effected on the first Christmas.

It would be possible to take a minimalist attitude to the incarnation: the Son of God became human in order to gather together a few believers, but other than that nothing has changed. For them Jesus saves, and the rest of the world carries on much as before.

John, however, was a maximalist: when God, in Christ, took human nature as his own, everything changed. People and places, plants and animals, wood and precious stones, oil and water and bread, all of these were illuminated by his coming. The shockwaves penetrated deep beneath the surface - the shape of our relationships, the cast of our imaginations, the very pattern of our logic were transformed by the coming of Christ.

John's immediate concern in formulating his thought in this way was to defend the use of icons in worship, which had been banned by the emperor in Constantinople. The imperial logic was this: "Images had been banned in the Old Testament, so how could they be venerated now? Surely God is unlimited. If you cannot even draw a line around him, how can you possibly draw him?"

John replied with the paradox of the Word made flesh: "When he who is ... immeasurable in the boundlessness of his own nature ... empties himself and takes the form of a servant, then you may draw his image and show it to anyone willing to gaze upon it." God's own action has transformed the very logic of our language about him. We have learnt to say that the invisible Son was seen, the immortal Son suffered death. We have had to learn to see his majesty in his humility, and his power working through his merciful love.

But surely it is idolatrous to worship mere matter? "I do not worship matter," John replied. "I worship the creator of matter who became matter for my sake, who ... worked out my salvation through matter." It is not that the material world is divine, but that God has stooped to enter his own creation. Consequently, the Christian must show reverence not only to the Creator, but also to his creatures. Mary is to be honoured, because the flesh that the Word took was hers. The saints are to be honoured, because they are his friends. Nazareth and Gethsemane are to be honoured, because he walked there. The material world itself is to be treated with reverence, because its very elements sustained his human life. The world has become charged with his presence, as iron becomes red-hot in a fire.

That is also why the Christian prince must revere the pauper: hence Good King Wenceslas on the Feast of Stephen. Actually, he was a prince, and the story in the carol turns out to be a later invention. But Wenceslas has indeed been remembered since the 10th century as a good Christian ruler, who cared practically for the poor and suffering. His legend grew, but the essential shape of Christian love, humble and reverent, remained.

John of Damascus, ironically, was safe to attack the Christian emperor because he was writing from Jerusalem under Muslim rule. Yet he seems a poor model for inter-faith dialogue. He expected the Jews from the honour due to the rest of humanity because, he argued, they had rejected salvation. Moreover, his emphasis on the power of the incarnation could scandalise non-Christians. Is it not safer to go along with the minimalist and play down the effect of Christmas?

The problem with the minimalist view is that creation and salvation seem unconnected, as if God is working on two separate projects. But the incarnation makes sense only in the light of creation: the Word through whom all things were made came to dwell among us. It is because God has already created out of purposeful love that he wishes to dignify his creation by dwelling within it. Through the incarnation, Christians have learnt to honour people and paintings; and in doing so we are sharing and fulfilling the Jews' faith in their Creator.

For a Christian the Old Testament and the New tell a single story. God, as Creator and as Redeemer, has a unified plan. There is joy at the death of Stephen, because its purpose has been restored to the creation: not death, but everlasting life with God. Margaret Atkins is a lecturer in theology at Trinity & All Saints College, Leeds.

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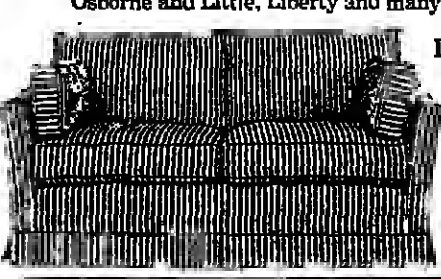
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RE-OPENS SATURDAY 3rd JANUARY

17/SHARES

Little seasonal cheer as Footsie suffers its worst Christmas

MARKET REPORT



DEREK PAIN

INDICES

FTSE 100 5083.9 down 35.9
FTSE 250 4698.1 down 8.2
FTSE 350 2483.5 down 14.8
Dow Jones
Nikkei 14224.98 up 125.58
Hang Seng 10342.44 down 25.66

Shares failed to hit the festive jackpot this year. Usually they enjoy a spectacular spree in the Christmas run-up. Indeed a way to have made money in most years in the past two decades has been to buy Footsie as the second half of December arrived.

But not this year. On Christmas Eve the blue-chip index fell 35.9 points to 5,013.9. At one time it was down 45.2.

So, unless there is a more rewarding display next week, the yearly Footsie gamble will have been lost.

In the second part of the month Footsie has so far witnessed a 31.3 decline. It has, however, achieved a 182.1 gain since December dawned, drawing its strength in the first few days of the month.

The Christmas Eve display was the worst on the last trad-

ing day before Christmas since the Footsie was created in 1984.

New York's overnight decline ensured what is always little more than a token session opened hesitantly. With most offices operating with skeleton staffs and only a few fund managers bothering to leave the comfort of their homes there was little buying interest. Sea volume was 241.6 million.

Sears, the struggling retailer which sold another chunk of its once renowned shoe empire on Tuesday, accounted for 38 million. A single unmatched trade, possibly a bed and breakfast deal, of 37.7 million shares was the decisive influence. The price was a shade over 47p. It left Sears off 1p at 49.5p.

Premier Asset Management, a venture capitalist-style operation which used to be called Gabriel Trust, was responsible, if the publication was correct, for a further 28 million. The price held at 15.75p.

There was, however, considerable volatility as the market drew towards its traditional lunch time close. Order-driven trading was to blame; there did not appear to be many large trades in the final 30 minutes.

Blue Circle Industries celebrated its quick return to Footsie with a 6p gain to 338p and Rolls-Royce, up 2p at 230p, continued to draw strength from the Henderson Crosthwaite buy circular.

Rio Tinto, the resources group, had a humpy ride although there was little trading. The shares fell 30.5p to 705p, just above their year's low. The group's 67 per cent owned Camaloff off-shoot is buying con-

ware and crackers were up 10p per cent from last year.

Danka Business Systems had another poor session. Hit for six when it produced a surprise profit warning the shares had staged a modest recovery. Now it is being used by US investors for allegedly making misleading statements.

Its warning last week sent the shares crashing 292.5p to 217.5p. They have since clawed their way back to 348.5p. The legal action pushed them to 222.5p. In the summer the shares were 787.5p.

Bloompartides International, the hard-pressed health care group, managed a 2.5p gain to 455p, presumably a knee jerk reaction to a modest US buy. Galen, the health care group which this week arrived in the FTSE 250 index, added 14p to 338.5p and media buyer Aegis hardened 0.5p to 67.5p after the FMR investment group picked up nearly 1 per cent, taking its stake to 5.07 per cent.

There was a smattering of action on the under card. Railway, a printer, jumped 21p to 61.5p following a bid approach and Tappet Life Sciences, the health group suffering from a boardroom split, rose 5.5p to 37.5p.

Abacus Recruitment, which recently said profits were running ahead of expectations, put on 2p to a 260p peak.

Helical Bar, the property group, held at 558p. It has sold a London office property to a German group for £27m. North Ports remained at 61.5p after the Scottish Office made favourable noises about its ambitious Leith waterfront development.

Manders, the ink group, was unchanged at 24.5p after Flint Ink, a US group, picked up 8.27 per cent of the capital at 248p.

TAKING STOCK

London & Edinburgh Publishing held at 6.5p. It has had a tough time since it arrived last year at 10p; missing its prospectus profit forecast and then going into the red. But the arrival of John Webber as chairman and David Ellingham as his deputy promised better times. On Christmas Eve came the first outward sign of action. L&E is raising £30,000 by selling shares at 6p and is in talks to buy another company.

Barbican Healthcare is paying £2.15m for two dental businesses, Corporate Dental Services and M Spencer-Swaine. Its shares added 2p to 44.5p.

A share buy-in by financial group BWD Securities. It purchased 5.03 per cent of its capital at 121p a share. The price rose 1.5p to 120p.

52 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	PRE	Code
Alcoholic Beverages	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
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4000 Alcatel	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
4000 Alcatel	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Government Securities

52 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	PRE	Code
Alcoholic Beverages	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
4000 Alcatel	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
4000 Alcatel	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
4000 Alcatel	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
4000 Alcatel	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Index-Linked

52 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	PRE	Code
Alcoholic Beverages	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
4000 Alcatel	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
4000 Alcatel	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
4000 Alcatel	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
4000 Alcatel	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Longs

52 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	PRE	Code
Alcoholic Beverages	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
4000 Alcatel	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
4000 Alcatel	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
4000 Alcatel	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
4000 Alcatel	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

One Man's fortunes to take a Rough turn at Kempton

A year ago, One Man trounced Rough Quest in the King George VI Chase, but as Greg Wood suggests, different ground conditions today might create a very different result - and at rewarding odds.

The betting might imply that One Man is effectively home and dry in the King George VI Chase this afternoon, but "dry" is very much the operative word. The easy winner in each of the last two seasons he may be, but if the rain which fell on Kempton in the days before Christmas has got in to the ground, One Man may stop very suddenly just when he should be accelerating. For a huge crowd still carrying a stone or so overweight in turkey and trimmings, this would do nothing to aid the digestion.

So pronounced are One Man's stamina limitations that you could pinpoint to within a stride or two the moment when he started to flag 12 months ago. At the time, he was so far ahead - Mr Mulligan, the subsequent Gold Cup winner, had just fallen when a clear second - that it did not matter, and the bare foot offers no reason why either Rough Quest (second) or Barton Bank (third) should turn the tables today. Crucially, though, that race was on good described officially as good to firm, and to judge by the winning time that day, very much on the firm side of that. On good to soft, or softer, the result could be very different, and as the last two Gold Cups have demonstrated, when One Man stops, he stops for good.

Whether Rough Quest - or See More Business, who also oeds soft ground - will even fine up will not be decided finally until this morning, which makes this a difficult race to analyse in detail. It seems likely, though, that the ground will be too much for See More Business, an impressive and improving winner twice already this season, while Yorkshire Gale and Djed-dah are out of their depth, and Challenger Du Luc has developed galloping seconditis. It is four years since Barton Bank won this race, and three since he fell at the last with victory assured, but odds of 5-1 about a horse with just one victory in nine outings over the last two seasons are far too short. If One Man is poor value at 11-8 - and he is - this leaves Rough Quest (next best, 2.20) as an outstanding bet at around 9-1 if he lines up, and Sun Bay, the Hennessy winner, as the one to be on if he does not.

The best bet of all on the holiday card is SECRET SPRING (nap 1.45), who ran Sanmarti-

RICHARD EDMONDSON
NAP: One Man
(Kempton 2.20)
NB: Secret Spring
(Kempton 1.45)

no very close in the novice hurdle over course and distance a year ago and was given a very gentle seasonal re-introduction at Cheltenham last month. He was still travelling sweetly with two flights to jump, something which would not normally escape the attention of the odds-compilers, so it is a welcome surprise to find 5-1 available about him this morning. Some very desperate people will be watching the novice hurdle which opens the card. They are the ones who backed Zaraska down to low double figures for the Champion Hurdle before his unfortunate defeat - at odds of 1-5 - by Wabba Sands recently, and nothing but victory will do today if he is to stand any chance at Cheltenham in March. Some other useful Flat performers are in opposition today, but both Royal Gal and Alderbrook were beaten in novice hurdles before going on



Sun Bay shines impressive in his work at home, Sun Bay may have to give best to Rough Quest at Kempton today

Photograph: Robert Hallam

to win as novices at the Festival, and Zaraska (12.40) deserves another chance. The Feltham Novices' Chase, the main supporting race on the card, is not really one on which to risk money, since at least four of the runners have fair claims, although Fiddling The Facts is probably the most promising of all, and should at least confirm the form of her recent defeat of Otowa, even on 7lb worse terms. Elsewhere on one of racing's busiest days of the year, the Rowland Meyrick Handicap Chase at Wetherby has attracted an excellent field, including Sparky Gayle, who disappointed

when favourite for the Murphy's Gold Cup, and another of last season's most promising novices, Colonel In Chief (2.25). The latter should probably have beaten Strath Royal over course and distance earlier this month, and is unlikely to return empty handed today. Wincanton, too, has much to offer refugees from the leftovers, with Slaty Home, Northern Starlight (1.55) and Around the Gale among the runners for the Mid Season Chase, not to mention a 14-runner field for the Gold Card Hurdle. Qualifier which offers optimists and pin-stickers a chance to recoup the Christmas expenses in one inspired hit.

Sheikh stands by his threat

Sheikh Mohammed reiterated his threat to withdraw his family's horses in training in Britain unless prize money levels improve in a meeting with the British Horseracing Board chief executive, Tristram Ricketts, in Dubai this week. In a statement issued on Christmas Eve, Ricketts said: "Sheikh Mohammed re-emphasised to me a number of key messages. First, that he is speaking on behalf of his family who all share the views expressed in the Gimcrack speech. Secondly, everybody should understand that he and his family really do mean what was said. "Thirdly, that they are deeply concerned about the low levels of prize money in this country and want to see steady progress towards significant improvements in these levels for the benefit of all owners and of racing in general." While unable to offer a quick-fix solution, Ricketts told the Sheikh "the steps which the BHB is taking to approach Government again" to highlight the problems and possible ways to address them.

HUNTINGDON

HYPERION
12.30 The Toisearch 1.00 Garethson 1.30 Ernest William 2.00 High Learie 2.30 Edmond 3.00 Fenwick's Brother 3.30 Sunvignon
GOING: Good to soft. Right-hand level course. Run-in 200yds.
Course is at junction of A1 and A64. ADMISSION: Members 50c; Paddock 50c; Course 25c. CAR PARK: Parking area 25c, rest room 10c. 1st Race 12.30, 2nd 1.00, 3rd 1.30, 4th 2.00, 5th 2.30, 6th 3.00, 7th 3.30, 8th 4.00, 9th 4.30, 10th 5.00, 11th 5.30, 12th 6.00, 13th 6.30, 14th 7.00, 15th 7.30, 16th 8.00, 17th 8.30, 18th 9.00, 19th 9.30, 20th 10.00, 21st 10.30, 22nd 11.00, 23rd 11.30, 24th 12.00, 25th 12.30, 26th 1.00, 27th 1.30, 28th 2.00, 29th 2.30, 30th 3.00, 31st 3.30, 32nd 4.00, 33rd 4.30, 34th 5.00, 35th 5.30, 36th 6.00, 37th 6.30, 38th 7.00, 39th 7.30, 40th 8.00, 41st 8.30, 42nd 9.00, 43rd 9.30, 44th 10.00, 45th 10.30, 46th 11.00, 47th 11.30, 48th 12.00, 49th 12.30, 50th 1.00, 51st 1.30, 52nd 2.00, 53rd 2.30, 54th 3.00, 55th 3.30, 56th 4.00, 57th 4.30, 58th 5.00, 59th 5.30, 60th 6.00, 61st 6.30, 62nd 7.00, 63rd 7.30, 64th 8.00, 65th 8.30, 66th 9.00, 67th 9.30, 68th 10.00, 69th 10.30, 70th 11.00, 71st 11.30, 72nd 12.00, 73rd 12.30, 74th 1.00, 75th 1.30, 76th 2.00, 77th 2.30, 78th 3.00, 79th 3.30, 80th 4.00, 81st 4.30, 82nd 5.00, 83rd 5.30, 84th 6.00, 85th 6.30, 86th 7.00, 87th 7.30, 88th 8.00, 89th 8.30, 90th 9.00, 91st 9.30, 92nd 10.00, 93rd 10.30, 94th 11.00, 95th 11.30, 96th 12.00, 97th 12.30, 98th 1.00, 99th 1.30, 100th 2.00, 101st 2.30, 102nd 3.00, 103rd 3.30, 104th 4.00, 105th 4.30, 106th 5.00, 107th 5.30, 108th 6.00, 109th 6.30, 110th 7.00, 111th 7.30, 112th 8.00, 113th 8.30, 114th 9.00, 115th 9.30, 116th 10.00, 117th 10.30, 118th 11.00, 119th 11.30, 120th 12.00, 121st 12.30, 122nd 1.00, 123rd 1.30, 124th 2.00, 125th 2.30, 126th 3.00, 127th 3.30, 128th 4.00, 129th 4.30, 130th 5.00, 131st 5.30, 132nd 6.00, 133rd 6.30, 134th 7.00, 135th 7.30, 136th 8.00, 137th 8.30, 138th 9.00, 139th 9.30, 140th 10.00, 141st 10.30, 142nd 11.00, 143rd 11.30, 144th 12.00, 145th 12.30, 146th 1.00, 147th 1.30, 148th 2.00, 149th 2.30, 150th 3.00, 151st 3.30, 152nd 4.00, 153rd 4.30, 154th 5.00, 155th 5.30, 156th 6.00, 157th 6.30, 158th 7.00, 159th 7.30, 160th 8.00, 161st 8.30, 162nd 9.00, 163rd 9.30, 164th 10.00, 165th 10.30, 166th 11.00, 167th 11.30, 168th 12.00, 169th 12.30, 170th 1.00, 171st 1.30, 172nd 2.00, 173rd 2.30, 174th 3.00, 175th 3.30, 176th 4.00, 177th 4.30, 178th 5.00, 179th 5.30, 180th 6.00, 181st 6.30, 182nd 7.00, 183rd 7.30, 184th 8.00, 185th 8.30, 186th 9.00, 187th 9.30, 188th 10.00, 189th 10.30, 190th 11.00, 191st 11.30, 192nd 12.00, 193rd 12.30, 194th 1.00, 195th 1.30, 196th 2.00, 197th 2.30, 198th 3.00, 199th 3.30, 200th 4.00, 201st 4.30, 202nd 5.00, 203rd 5.30, 204th 6.00, 205th 6.30, 206th 7.00, 207th 7.30, 208th 8.00, 209th 8.30, 210th 9.00, 211th 9.30, 212th 10.00, 213th 10.30, 214th 11.00, 215th 11.30, 216th 12.00, 217th 12.30, 218th 1.00, 219th 1.30, 220th 2.00, 221st 2.30, 222nd 3.00, 223rd 3.30, 224th 4.00, 225th 4.30, 226th 5.00, 227th 5.30, 228th 6.00, 229th 6.30, 230th 7.00, 231st 7.30, 232nd 8.00, 233rd 8.30, 234th 9.00, 235th 9.30, 236th 10.00, 237th 10.30, 238th 11.00, 239th 11.30, 240th 12.00, 241st 12.30, 242nd 1.00, 243rd 1.30, 244th 2.00, 245th 2.30, 246th 3.00, 247th 3.30, 248th 4.00, 249th 4.30, 250th 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576th 12.00, 577th 12.30, 578th 1.00, 579th 1.30, 580th 2.00, 581st 2.30, 582nd 3.00, 583rd 3.30, 584th 4.00, 585th 4.30, 586th 5.00, 587th 5.30, 588th 6.00, 589th 6.30, 590th 7.00, 591st 7.30, 592nd 8.00, 593rd 8.30, 594th 9.00, 595th 9.30, 596th 10.00, 597th 10.30, 598th 11.00, 599th 11.30, 600th 12.00, 601st 12.30, 602nd 1.00, 603rd 1.30, 604th 2.00, 605th 2.30, 606th 3.00, 607th 3.30, 608th 4.00, 609th 4.30, 610th 5.00, 611th 5.30, 612th 6.00, 613th 6.30, 614th 7.00, 615th 7.30, 616th 8.00, 617th 8.30, 618th 9.00, 619th 9.30, 620th 10.00, 621st 10.30, 622nd 11.00, 623rd 11.30, 624th 12.00, 625th 12.30, 626th 1.00, 627th 1.30, 628th 2.00, 629th 2.30, 630th 3.00, 631st 3.30, 632nd 4.00, 633rd 4.30, 634th 5.00, 635th 5.30, 636th 6.00, 637th 6.30, 638th 7.00, 639th 7.30, 640th 8.00, 641st 8.30, 642nd 9.00, 643rd 9.30, 644th 10.00, 645th 10.30, 646th 11.00, 647th 11.30, 648th 12.00, 649th 12.30, 650th 1.00, 651st 1.30, 652nd 2.00, 653rd 2.30, 654th 3.00, 655th 3.30, 656th 4.00, 657th 4.30, 658th 5.00, 659th 5.30, 660th 6.00, 661st 6.30, 662nd 7.00, 663rd 7.30, 664th 8.00, 665th 8.30, 666th 9.00, 667th 9.30, 668th 10.00, 669th 10.30, 670th 11.00, 671st 11.30, 672nd 12.00, 673rd 12.30, 674th 1.00, 675th 1.30, 676th 2.00, 677th 2.30, 678th 3.00, 679th 3.30, 680th 4.00, 681st 4.30, 682nd 5.00, 683rd 5.30, 684th 6.00, 685th 6.30, 686th 7.00, 687th 7.30, 688th 8.00, 689th 8.30, 690th 9.00, 691st 9.30, 692nd 10.00, 693rd 10.30, 694th 11.00, 695th 11.30, 696th 12.00, 697th 12.30, 698th 1.00, 699th 1.30, 700th 2.00, 701st 2.30, 702nd 3.00, 703rd 3.30, 704th 4.00, 705th 4.30, 706th 5.00, 707th 5.30, 708th 6.00, 709th 6.30, 710th 7.00, 711th 7.30, 712th 8.00, 713th 8.30, 714th 9.00, 715th 9.30, 716th 10.00, 717th 10.30, 718th 11.00, 719th 11.30, 720th 12.00, 721st 12.30, 722nd 1.00, 723rd 1.30, 724th 2.00, 725th 2.30, 726th 3.00, 727th 3.30, 728th 4.00, 729th 4.30, 730th 5.00, 731st 5.30, 732nd 6.00, 733rd 6.30, 734th 7.00, 735th 7.30, 736th 8.00, 737th 8.30, 738th 9.00, 739th 9.30, 740th 10.00, 741st 10.30, 742nd 11.00, 743rd 11.30, 744th 12.00, 745th 12.30, 746th 1.00, 747th 1.30, 748th 2.00, 749th 2.30, 750th 3.00, 751st 3.30, 752nd 4.00, 753rd 4.30, 754th 5.00, 755th 5.30, 756th 6.00, 757th 6.30, 758th 7.00, 759th 7.30, 760th 8.00, 761st 8.30, 762nd 9.00, 763rd 9.30, 764th 10.00, 765th 10.30, 766th 11.00, 767th 11.30, 768th 12.00, 769th 12.30, 770th 1.00, 771st 1.30, 772nd 2.00, 773rd 2.30, 774th 3.00, 775th 3.30, 776th 4.00, 777th 4.30, 778th 5.00, 779th 5.30, 780th 6.00, 781st 6.30, 782nd 7.00, 783rd 7.30, 784th 8.00, 785th 8.30, 786th 9.00, 787th 9.30, 788th 10.00, 789th 10.30, 790th 11.00, 791st 11.30, 792nd 12.00, 793rd 12.30, 794th 1.00, 795th 1.30, 796th 2.00, 797th 2.30, 798th 3.00, 799th 3.30, 800th 4.00, 801st 4.30, 802nd 5.00, 803rd 5.30, 804th 6.00, 805th 6.30, 806th 7.00, 807th 7.30, 808th 8.00, 809th 8.30, 810th 9.00, 811th 9.30, 812th 10.00, 813th 10.30, 814th 11.00, 815th 11.30, 816th 12.00, 817th 12.30, 818th 1.00, 819th 1.30, 820th 2.00, 821st 2.30, 822nd 3.00, 823rd 3.30, 824th 4.00, 825th 4.30, 826th 5.00, 827th 5.30, 828th 6.00, 829th 6.30, 830th 7.00, 831st 7.30, 832nd 8.00, 833rd 8.30, 834th 9.00, 835th 9.30, 836th 10.00, 837th 10.30, 838th 11.00, 839th 11.30, 840th 12.00, 841st 12.30, 842nd 1.00, 843rd 1.30, 844th 2.00, 845th 2.30, 846th 3.00, 847th 3.30, 848th 4.00, 849th 4.30, 850th 5.00, 851st 5.30, 852nd 6.00, 853rd 6.30, 854th 7.00, 855th 7.30, 856th 8.00, 857th 8.30, 858th 9.00, 859th 9.30, 860th 10.00, 861st 10.30, 862nd 11.00, 863rd 11.30, 864th 12.00, 865th 12.30, 866th 1.00, 867th 1.30, 868th 2.00, 869th 2.30, 870th 3.00, 871st 3.30, 872nd 4.00, 873rd 4.30, 874th 5.00, 875th 5.30, 876th 6.00, 877th 6.30, 878th 7.00, 879th 7.30, 880th 8.00, 881st 8.30, 882nd 9.00, 883rd 9.30, 884th 10.00, 885th 10.30, 886th 11.00, 887th 11.30, 888th 12.00, 889th 12.30, 890th 1.00, 891st 1.30, 892nd 2.00, 893rd 2.30, 894th 3.00, 895th 3.30, 896th 4.00, 897th 4.30, 898th 5.00, 899th 5.30, 900th 6.00, 901st 6.30, 902nd 7.00, 903rd 7.30, 904th 8.00, 905th 8.30, 906th 9.00, 907th 9.30, 908th 10.00, 909th 10.30, 910th 11.00, 911th 11.30, 912th 12.00, 913th 12.30, 914th 1.00, 915th 1.30, 916th 2.00, 917th 2.30, 918th 3.00, 919th 3.30, 920th 4.00, 921st

SPORTING QUIZ OF THE YEAR

Palace to offer Zola as they go for Dublin

WINNERS AND LOSERS

- 1 Who scored his first century in 25 Test matches but still ended up on the losing side?
- 2 Who lost the Johannesburg battle but won the South African war?
- 3 Who lost 8-4 on the final day but still won?
- 4 Who lost his place in the England team but came off the bench to inspire victory in Cardiff?
- 5 Who survived their final-day shoot-out but lost their home?
- 6 Who scored 16 points, a record for a British player in a home match against Australia, but ultimately ended up on the losing side?
- 7 Which England team won at the start and the end but lost too many in the middle?
- 8 Who lost at Villa Park in May but were reprieved by results at Elland Road and Selhurst Park?
- 9 Who won at Wembley and drew in Rome but still lost out?
- 10 Who was happy to lose all his hair in Durban?

RECORDS AND LANDMARKS



STRANGE BUT TRUE

- 1 When was rain in the desert not welcome?
- 2 Which Irishman's pursuit of major success was harmed by an unscheduled visit to a Scottish beach?
- 3 Why was Georgi Kinkladze at Wembley when Manchester City were not?
- 4 Whose world title challenge ended in tears?
- 5 How did a chicken farmer humiliate England?
- 6 Which Romanian footballer made a return trip to Spain via the East End of London?
- 7 When did Linda get the better of Gazza?
- 8 How did 13 contenders lose out to a winning pickpocket at Epsom?
- 9 Who enjoyed success in Georgia after an unlikely opening score of 40-30?
- 10 What caused Venus Williams and Ginger Helgeson Nielson to scuffle away during a tennis match in the Lipton Championships at Key Biscayne?

RECORDS AND LANDMARKS

- 1 Where did an Ethiopian lose two world records on the same night to two Kenyans?
- 2 Who extended their unbeaten run in Cardiff to 14 years with a victory by the narrowest of margins?
- 3 Which England captain reached her century at the Almondvale Stadium in Livingston?
- 4 Who had every reason to feel bullish after ending a 16-year wait?
- 5 Which French race was won in a time nearly two seconds faster than in any of its previous 75 runnings?
- 6 Who was poles apart for a record sixth time in a row?
- 7 Who made history by winning in two countries on the same day?
- 8 Who broke a series of records by scoring 52 points in Paris, 29 in London and 68 in Edinburgh?
- 9 Which Welsh team emulated their successes of 1948 and 1969 by winning in 1997?
- 10 Which team's hopes of recording an unprecedented 12th successive Test victory in a calendar year were denied by a late kick?

AROUND THE WORLD

- 1 Who recorded the first Australian success in New York for 24 years?
- 2 Which steeplechaser won on his debut for Britain and helped his team to victory in Munich?
- 3 Which American led a Swedish team to victory in South Africa after the opening battle of a 31,000-mile contest?

THE INVADERS

- 1 Which Swiss came to London and beat a record set 110 years earlier by the daughter of a wealthy Cheshire cotton broker?
- 2 Which Finn was on top of the world after finishing sixth in Cheltenham?
- 3 When did a Finn's retirement enable a Canadian to triumph in Northamptonshire?
- 4 Which American enjoyed major success in Britain after having to qualify for the same event on his two previous visits?
- 5 Who needed only 94 minutes to emulate Rod Laver?
- 6 Who returned to Wales 25

- years after a famous defeat to inflict a crushing 81-3 victory?
- 7 Which Italian inspired his team to a winning debut on Merseyside in August?
- 8 Which Australian secured his fourth world title by moving to an unbeatable 121-point lead with victory in Britain?
- 9 How did a Frenchman and a German thwart British ambitions on the same day at a new stadium?
- 10 Which foreign recruit bowed out of British sport with the following words: "I now wish to do other things. I always planned to retire when I was at the top."

FIFTEEN MINUTES OF FAME

- How did they hit the headlines?
- 1 Khosroddad Azizi
 - 2 Bohdan Ulihrach
 - 3 Phil Sharpe
 - 4 Sandrine Testud
 - 5 Karl Le Tissier
 - 6 Amy Kavanagh
 - 7 Jamie Hewitt
 - 8 John Huston
 - 9 Emily Drummond
 - 10 Le Bar Toulzac

WHO SAID IT?

- 1 "If I knock at the door often enough, as I seem to be doing, especially in this tournament, the door will open one day."
- 2 "It would have been great to get my 22nd victory, but we have shown all the field a clean pair of heels. This is a bloody good result and everyone should be pleased with it."
- 3 "We're 100 per cent behind him, but as much as I want him to carry on I love him too much to try and influence that decision if it's not right for him."
- 4 "Only an hour before the match I'd been sitting in the dressing-room alongside all the players I had looked up to since I've been a kid. I've got

- videos of some of them and now all of a sudden I was out on the same pitch as the Paul Inces and the Paul Gascoignes. It was fantastic."
- 5 "I don't think I have to prove myself as an athlete and they have not really listened to the medical situation I have had... The thing that really upset me is that no one contacted me to tell me about this. No one had the decency or the courtesy just to phone me."
- 6 "The ref was absolutely magnificent. It is the fairest performance I have seen from a referee for years."
- 7 "I looked at the Sheffield players coming off the pitch just

- now. Their world had caved in for the time being. That was what we had to suffer last season."
- 8 "It was simply a typical racing accident, one of those things that happen. Jacques got a bad start and I just went for the gap on the inside."
- 9 "I never thought he would try to take me out because he isn't that type of sportsman. But he obviously drove to make things as difficult for me as possible."
- 10 "Jacques cut in and didn't try to brake at all. Certainly, I closed the door. It was clearly about winning it all or nothing, and there was nothing more to lose."

ANSWERS

Winners and losers
1. Who scored his first century in 25 Test matches but still ended up on the losing side? **Clive Lloyd**
2. Who lost the Johannesburg battle but won the South African war? **Herbert Goldhamer**
3. Who lost 8-4 on the final day but still won? **England**
4. Who lost his place in the England team but came off the bench to inspire victory in Cardiff? **Paul Jones**
5. Who survived their final-day shoot-out but lost their home? **England**
6. Who scored 16 points, a record for a British player in a home match against Australia, but ultimately ended up on the losing side? **Paul Jones**
7. Which England team won at the start and the end but lost too many in the middle? **England**
8. Who lost at Villa Park in May but were reprieved by results at Elland Road and Selhurst Park? **England**
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Records and landmarks
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2. Who extended their unbeaten run in Cardiff to 14 years with a victory by the narrowest of margins? **England**
3. Which England captain reached her century at the Almondvale Stadium in Livingston? **England**
4. Who had every reason to feel bullish after ending a 16-year wait? **England**
5. Which French race was won in a time nearly two seconds faster than in any of its previous 75 runnings? **France**
6. Who was poles apart for a record sixth time in a row? **England**
7. Who made history by winning in two countries on the same day? **England**
8. Who broke a series of records by scoring 52 points in Paris, 29 in London and 68 in Edinburgh? **England**
9. Which Welsh team emulated their successes of 1948 and 1969 by winning in 1997? **Wales**
10. Which team's hopes of recording an unprecedented 12th successive Test victory in a calendar year were denied by a late kick? **England**

Around the world
1. Who recorded the first Australian success in New York for 24 years? **England**
2. Which steeplechaser won on his debut for Britain and helped his team to victory in Munich? **England**
3. Which American led a Swedish team to victory in South Africa after the opening battle of a 31,000-mile contest? **England**

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1. Which Swiss came to London and beat a record set 110 years earlier by the daughter of a wealthy Cheshire cotton broker? **England**
2. Which Finn was on top of the world after finishing sixth in Cheltenham? **England**
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4. Which American enjoyed major success in Britain after having to qualify for the same event on his two previous visits? **England**
5. Who needed only 94 minutes to emulate Rod Laver? **England**
6. Who returned to Wales 25 years after a famous defeat to inflict a crushing 81-3 victory? **England**
7. Which Italian inspired his team to a winning debut on Merseyside in August? **England**
8. Which Australian secured his fourth world title by moving to an unbeatable 121-point lead with victory in Britain? **England**
9. How did a Frenchman and a German thwart British ambitions on the same day at a new stadium? **England**
10. Which foreign recruit bowed out of British sport with the following words: "I now wish to do other things. I always planned to retire when I was at the top." **England**

Fifteen minutes of fame
How did they hit the headlines?
1. Khosroddad Azizi **England**
2. Bohdan Ulihrach **England**
3. Phil Sharpe **England**
4. Sandrine Testud **England**
5. Karl Le Tissier **England**
6. Amy Kavanagh **England**
7. Jamie Hewitt **England**
8. John Huston **England**
9. Emily Drummond **England**
10. Le Bar Toulzac **England**

Who said it?
1. "If I knock at the door often enough, as I seem to be doing, especially in this tournament, the door will open one day." **England**
2. "It would have been great to get my 22nd victory, but we have shown all the field a clean pair of heels. This is a bloody good result and everyone should be pleased with it." **England**
3. "We're 100 per cent behind him, but as much as I want him to carry on I love him too much to try and influence that decision if it's not right for him." **England**
4. "Only an hour before the match I'd been sitting in the dressing-room alongside all the players I had looked up to since I've been a kid. I've got

videos of some of them and now all of a sudden I was out on the same pitch as the Paul Inces and the Paul Gascoignes. It was fantastic."

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now. Their world had caved in for the time being. That was what we had to suffer last season."

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Palace to offer Zola as they go for Dublin

more as

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SNOW

NEWSTEL

Ferguson cheered by United's year of youthful maturity

Manchester United's players were full of the Christmas spirit yesterday – but not in the alcoholic sense. Points not pints are the priority at Old Trafford these days.

As he watched his team prepare for the rigours of the coming months, Alex Ferguson talked to Glenn Moore about the past year's success – and of his ambition to field a team of teetotallers.

Manchester United's benevolent dictator looked out of his office window yesterday morning and chuckled. This was not because of a sadistic delight at having dragged his players away from their families to train in the rain on Christmas Day morning, but out of pleasure at their reaction.

"The young ones are beating the old buggers," he said barely suppressing his mirth. "They are all dancing about because usually the old boys beat them."

No signs of pressure at the champions' camp, and no wonder after the year they have had. Discounting the Coca-Cola Cup (as United do) they go into today's match with Everton at Old Trafford having lost just eight games, and won 31, out of 50 played. Not bad for a year's work even if two of the defeats, home and away to Borussia Dortmund, still hurt.

"Would I have settled for the year we've had last January? Oh yes," said Ferguson. "We won the title and that's always the ball and end-all for me. It would have been a bonus if we had got to the European Cup final but we had the experience of getting to the semi-final."

"The highlight for me, apart from winning the League, is the maturity of the young players and the team as a whole, and the way [Teddy] Sheringham fitted in. He has the vision you need in big games. With players like [Paul] Scholes and him, [Ryan] Giggs and [David] Beckham, you look forward to matches."

"Teddy has combined very well with Andy Cole. He is an unselfish player. He will lay a pass on even if he has a chance of scoring, like [Eric] Cantona would. He works really hard for us. Some players get a chance late in their career, like Tony



Going for the hat-trick Ferguson is aiming for his third successive title – "The one advantage we have is that we have been there so many times now"

Photograph: Fotosports International

Book at Manchester City, and Teddy, coming to us at 31, has absolutely grasped it.

"It took him a while to get used to it. The games come thick and fast at the start of the season and every game is a cup tie for us. Henning Berg was the same, he hit a plateau. That happens. Cantona did that when he came. If they are good enough, they come again."

Another player worthy of special mention in United's year is Peter Schmeichel, his excellence is often taken for granted until highlighted by performances like that at Newcastle last Sunday. "He's magnificent," said Ferguson. "His last save at Newcastle was even

better than those he made there two years ago. He's not dropped his level at all. He's still ambitious and that's important."

One match stands out. The 3-2 victory over Juventus on 1 October. "That opened the door this season. We never start the season that well and this time was no different, but that performance brought the team on to another level. The performance against Kosice had been economical, careful and patient, but there was no acceleration. Against Juventus they were magnificent."

"The wins at Anfield were also major results because the games against Liverpool are massive now. It may change, but

in my time here the derby matches against City don't assume the proportions of Liverpool games."

The worst match is no surprise. It's Europe again and the tie with Dortmund. "That semi-final was a killer, no doubt. It was not that we played badly but we let ourselves down with the finishing. I keep thinking about the chances we had time and time again...the Germans are lucky bastards," he added, tongue only half in cheek.

Roy Keane's injury was another low point. "Not so much for us as for the lad's career," said Ferguson with customary paternalism. "To me he is the best all-round player in Britain.

But we won't rush him. He will be given the full remedial rehabilitation before he comes back. The operation was a complete success. He's looking terrific, he's getting itchy feet now but that's not a problem for me to slow that down. I'll be happy just to have him back in August."

"The strange thing is it solved a problem for me. It was becoming a real headache getting Scholes in the team; he had come on in leaps and bounds. You would not want it to happen that way but Keane's injury solved it as he and [Nicky] Butt have fitted in perfectly together."

United were doing light

training yesterday "to maintain the momentum" and keep the players loose in the limo. Once they would have brought their players in on Christmas Day just to ensure they did not overdo it on Christmas Eve.

That is not so much the case now. There are still a couple of enthusiastic imbibers at Old Trafford but there, and elsewhere in the Premiership, the numbers are declining. This, believes Ferguson, is a consequence of the foreign influx.

"I think there was a lot of scepticism when these players arrived, but there is a realisation that they have benefited the game. The way they prepare is an example, they look after

themselves. They don't drink."

There is a theory, still popular at some clubs, that a night on the tiles together fosters team spirit, but it is not one that United, whose team ethic is outstanding, appear to subscribe to. "I've always been against players drinking, and I'm always thinking of ways of getting a team that doesn't drink," Ferguson said. "Eventually that will happen. It may not be in my time but it will happen. I've got about seven players who don't drink at all in this squad. If you drink it affects your fitness."

A Christmas wish? "I wish linesmen would get it right. I don't think they understand the offside law well enough or

read the game well enough. I know it's hard with the pace of the game but too often a player is called offside and they're not. They should give the attacker the benefit. Linesmen should be brought to book. They are part of the entertainment industry."

Among Ferguson's Christmas presents were a pair of binoculars from his wife, Cathy. They are for when he goes horse racing but many will feel they may be more useful to United's challengers so they can keep track of them as, with their traditional New Year surge, they disappear over the horizon. Needless to say, Ferguson does not agree.

"No way, it is a hard league to win. There are a lot of games coming up. We may get involved in the FA Cup and will hopefully go to the death in Europe. That's a major season which stretches the capacity and endurance of your players. The continual demands means they will make mistakes, everyone will in that situation, so we're going to lose a game or two, or three."

United lost twice in the second half of last season yet still came from five points behind Liverpool at this stage last year, and Ferguson insisted: "So it's impossible to suggest that the league can be won in December or January. Someone may go on a run and get confident, Chelsea are looking strong at the moment, you can expect Arsenal and Liverpool to go on some sort of a run, and Newcastle."

"The one advantage we have is that we have been there so many times now. Ryan Giggs is 24 and he has four championship medals and could have six. There is a psychological factor to losing, especially in March or April and players like him can put a result in perspective."

So, increasingly these days, is the public view of Ferguson. The Angry Fergie image is being tempered by respect. "I think it is changing. People were writing about me before they knew me. They see me watching a game and say I'm dour. There is no perception of you as a person. I may be wiser, more experienced and I've mellowed in terms of my temper but I'm no different to how I was 25 years ago."

Even so, it is hard to imagine even the mellow Ferguson dressing up in a Santa Claus suit for a tabloid as one of his predecessors did this week. Anytime Everton get from his team at Old Trafford today will have to be earned.

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE PREVIEW

Robson seeking inspiration from the fans

The Middlesbrough manager Bryan Robson is looking to the club's fans as his team aim to rebound from last weekend's defeat at Manchester City.

The Nationwide League First Division leaders visit Huddersfield today, and Robson said: "The fans have been a terrific help with their overwhelming support."

"It's vital we bounce back from our defeat at Maine Road when we go to Huddersfield. We didn't compete in the opening 20 minutes last Saturday and paid the penalty. We must be fully-committed from the start against Huddersfield as they have shown improved form recently. There will be a sell-out crowd and I hope my players will get back to winning ways."

The Huddersfield midfielder Paul Dalton will hope to add a victory over Boro to his list

of Christmas presents after signing a new two-and-a-half-year extension to his current contract. His manager, Peter Jackson, said: "Paul has the ability to carry this club into the millennium."

"I firmly believe that judging by the talent he's shown since I arrived here, he has wasted his career so far. He's been fantastic and deserves his new contract. But it's vital he makes the most of the next few years both for the club and himself."

Denis Smith, who was confirmed as the new West Bromwich Albion manager on Christmas Eve, is in charge of his new side for the first time for today's visit to Reading. The former Oxford United manager is Albion's third manager in 12 months, but said: "I've signed a three-year contract and it is my intention to stay with Albion for this period. If Albion do as well in the

second half of the season as they have in the first I will be delighted – we will be pushing for promotion. I've had only one season as a manager in the Premier League and I would like to take Albion into the top division."

Smith has agreed to work with Albion's current coaches John Thewick and Cyril Regis. "I will have to rely upon their judgement for the first few games until I get to know the players," he said.

The Sunderland manager, Peter Reid, is confident his side will extend their unbeaten 12-match run, including four successive wins, to keep in touch with Middlesbrough. Sunderland play Bradford today, and Reid said: "We're on a roll and my lads are extremely confident. Promotion is not over by a long way – we'll definitely go close."

NON-LEAGUE NOTEBOOK

Harriers desperate for some local cheer

In the world of non-League football, Boxing Day is derby day. While the peculiarities of the Football League fixture computer and police restrictions mean that some Nationwide clubs have to make ludicrous journeys today (Birmingham to Ipswich, Fulham to Plymouth), there is no such nonsense in the semi-professional game. Throughout the country local rivals will do battle with little sign of goodwill towards neighbours.

Last season the biggest Boxing Day non-League crowd was at Aggborough, where 6,081 fans watched Bromsgrove Rovers beat Kidderminster Harriers. Rovers' relegation from the GM Vauxhall Conference has put an end to that Worcestershire derby, so Harriers will face a different foe at noon today.

Kidderminster make the short trip to Edgar Street to renew their rivalry with Hereford United. Harriers began 1997 15 points clear at the top of the Conference, and they still feel aggrieved that it was Macclesfield and not them who replaced Hereford in the League. This term their form has been poor – only five clubs are beneath them in the table – and they are desperate for a win today to revive their fortunes.

"It's a tough game," Graham Aitner, Harriers' manager, said. "But Hereford can't be happy with their home form. If we work hard our fortunes should improve. The signs are there that we're turning things round." The sides meet again at Aggborough on New Year's Day.

Elsewhere in the Conference, Stalybridge Celtic's new

managerial team, Mel Sterland and Imre Varadi, face a Cheshire derby at Northwich Victoria today for their first game in charge, while Morecambe against Southport will draw a big crowd to the Lancashire coast.

In the Dr Martens League Bromsgrove entertain Hale-sown Town this morning, while Nuneaton go to Atherstone and Burton Albion make the short journey to Gresley Rovers.

Local passions will be just as stirred in the lower leagues. On Teesside, Billingham Town take on Billingham Synthonia this morning, while tomorrow Sudbury Town play host to Sudbury Wanderers in Suffolk, and at noon in Somerset, Street have a league game against their neighbours, Glastonbury, for the first time since the 1954-55 season.

- Rupert Metcalf

SCOTTISH PREVIEW

Jackson ready to complete his remarkable recovery

Darren Jackson, the Scotland striker, returns to McDiarmid Park tomorrow – a ground that is etched in his memory. It was there in August he made his final League appearance for Celtic before he was told he needed brain surgery.

Jackson, who scored in that 2-1 victory against St Johnstone, then became ill with a violent headache in the run-up to the UEFA Cup match against Tiro 72 hours later. However, he has made a remarkable recovery and is back in the first-team squad, more than grateful to be wearing the green and white.

"It is incredible when you think about the chain of events since that match against St Johnstone," he said. "We won the match at McDiarmid Park well

with two good goals from Henrik Larsson and me. But three days later I was in hospital facing brain surgery. You can't get much more of a contrast."

"Thankfully things went well and here I am playing again which is brilliant. A lot of people have said I am ahead of schedule but I feel fine and I am really enjoying just being part of things again."

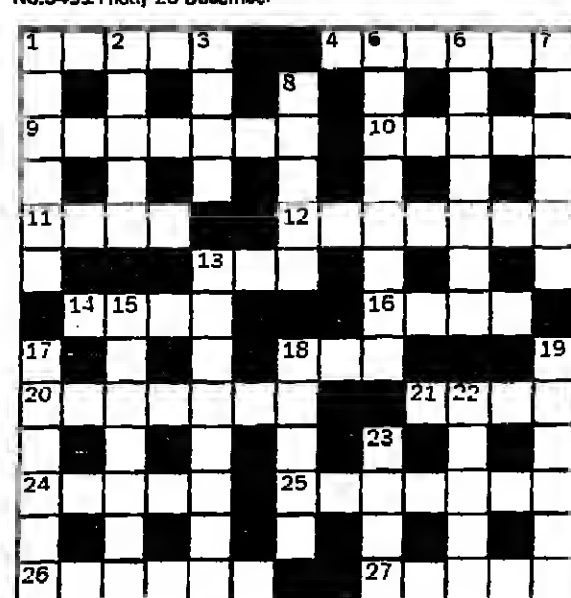
The leaders, Rangers, face the one team who have beaten them in the league this season, Dundee United, who were 2-1 winners at Tannadice in October. While the champions will be favourites, Rangers' only domestic home defeat also came against United, a 1-0 Coca-Cola Cup quarter-final loss.

- Ken Gaunt

GAMES

CONCISE CROSSWORD

No. 3491, Friday 26 December



ACROSS

- 1 Map (5)
- 4 Awaken from sleep (6)
- 9 Wash hair (7)
- 10 Larceny (5)
- 11 Requirement (4)
- 12 Small marsupial (7)
- 13 Attention (3)
- 14 Communist theoretician (4)
- 16 Clever (4)
- 18 Hair styling aid (3)
- 20 Ruler (7)
- 21 Frank (4)
- 24 Breed of dog (5)
- 25 Dramatic scene (7)
- 26 Tunny (6)
- 27 Female undergarment (5)

DOWN

- 1 Gambling establishment (6)
- 2 Conscious (5)
- 3 Variety (4)
- 5 Logical (8)
- 6 Implement (7)
- 7 Bury (6)
- 8 Benefactor (5)
- 13 Put into use (8)
- 15 Pain-killer (7)
- 17 Drawing instrument (6)
- 18 Jar (5)
- 19 Excessively (6)
- 22 Implore (5)
- 23 Aid (4)

Solution to Wednesday's Concise Crossword:

ACROSS: 1 Tabled, 5 Answer (Jazz dancer), 10 Tel Aviv, 11 Enrich, 12 Lady, 13 Pique, 17 Glove, 18 Bunt, 22 Bulky, 23 Daring, 24 Anus, 25 Aesop, 26 DOWN: 1 Stately, 2 Exclude, 3 Honey, 4 Unruly, 5 Swarm, 6 Fresh, 9 Everybody, 14 Sleeper, 15 Tapioca, 16 Anagram, 19 L, 20 Flour, 21 Traze.

BRIDGE OR CHESS

North-South game; dealer East			
North		East	
♠ Q 7 6		♠ A 3	
♥ K J 5 3		♥ A	
♦ 7 4		♦ Q J 10 9 5	
♣ K J 5		♣ 10 9 8 6 3	
West		South	
♠ K J 2		♠ 10 9 5 4	
♥ 10 9 6 5 4		♥ Q 7 2	
♦ A 6 2		♦ K 8 3	
♣ 7 4		♣ A Q 2	

"To protect or not to protect," as the Bard might have said, East opened 1♣. South passed, and West bid 1♥. East rebid 2♣. West hid 2♦, which was followed by two passes. It was a pairs event, and now South

wondered if he was being talked out of something. Nobody had bid spades or suggested No-trumps, so there seemed a fair chance that his partner had held some spades and that was not heretofore of value.

South decided to protect with 2♣ – not a success, for West began with a smart double, and the defence was merciless. West led ♠7 and, after winning in hand, declared the ill-judged play of a small trump to dummy's queen. East took his ace and cashed the ♠A to which West followed with the ♠K, a clear McKenney for a diamond return, also making it clear that he was not now angling for a club ruff. East dutifully switched to the ♠Q and was allowed to hold the trick. South ducked the ♠J which followed, but West was on target when he overtook with the ♠A and gave partner the heart ruff. Two trump tricks later, South was dutifully writing "minus 500" on his score sheet.

DAILY CHOICE

Show: Chicks with Flicks, King's Head, London N1 (0171-226 1916) 7pm & 9pm

"My head is in a spin, my feet don't touch the ground/When you are near to me my head goes round and round..." If you were around in the Seventies, you cannot fail to recognise the lyrics to Kelly-Marie's sensational one-hit wonder "It Feels Like I'm in Love". In her near legendary wardrobe, Kelly-Marie did for the zip-up space suit what Audrey Hepburn did for the little black cocktail number. According to famed trichologist and vocalist Jackie Clune, she also had "the bastardised brush-out flick". Clune's exacting examination of the tresses and stresses of Seventies sirens, an all-singing brush with hair- and song-stylists, is in the running for the year's most ridiculously enjoyable show. Social historians should book immediately, not to mention anyone who wants to know the true story behind the Nolan Sisters and their little-known involvement in the poll tax riots.

David Benedict

TODAY'S PICK

The Hunt (9pm BBC2) With the current debate about fox-hunting generating more heat than light, this fine, dispassionate documentary from the *Under the Sun* strand is a breath of fresh air. Nick Coppen spent one season with the Ludlow Hunt, one of the 200 or so in Britain. His film captures the daily hard work of organisation, as well as the beauty of the horses and hounds in full flight. Close up

and it's less pretty, of course. Coppen doesn't shy away from the more distressing images - a retired hound being shot (after a lifetime of pulling foxes to bits, they can't be kept as pets), farm animals being skinned (a secondary, money-raising role for the hunt), as well as the fate of the fox, the majority of which go to earth - finished off by spade, terrier and revolver.

Before They Were Famous II (9.40pm BBC1) Enjoyable sequel to Angus Deayton's tawdry pre-stardom footage. Highlights this time include a young Tony Blair losing his deposit, Slade as a bizarre boomer-folk combo, *Casualty*'s Charlie as a teenage pop star, Jonathan Ross in a Rice Krispies advert, and, best of all, Martin Clunes as a very Eddie Izzardish Dr Who villain.



Clark Gable in *Gone with the Wind*: 7.10pm C5

THE FILM

Gone with the Wind (7.10pm C5) "Frankly my dear..." Go on, lip-synch your way through what is probably the most popular movie of all time, as legendary for its making as for what ended up on the screen. David O. Selznick's production of Margaret Mitchell's Civil War epic, starring Vivien Leigh and Clark Gable, came with a long list of victims - notably director George Cukor, who was replaced by Victor Fleming (who in turn had a nervous breakdown). Fleming's sequences may be more prosaic than Cukor's, but at least he got the damned thing finished.

BBC1

- 6.30 **Children's BBC**: The GreedySaurus Gang (R) (0564607), 6.35 William's Wish Wellingtons (R) (S) (0563978), 6.40 Bump's Christmas Story (R) (S) (0749201), 6.50 Spot's Magical Christmas (R) (S) (0501771), 7.25 Toy Symphony (R) (S) (0661521), 7.50 White Christmas (R) (0745317), 8.15 Ek the Cat (S) (0626539), 8.40 Sweet Valley High (R) (0606607), 9.00 North and South - on Tour (S) (1789261), 9.25 Casper Classics (R) (0520220), 9.40 Teletubbies (S) (0833591).
- 10.30 **Superman III** (Richard Lester 1983 US). Christopher Reeve has to deal with the villainous Lex Luthor's plans for world domination in the heavily jockey second sequel. Richard Pryor livens matters up considerably as the computer buffoon arm-twisted into Vaughan's nefarious schemings - coming up with a digitally generated formula for kryptonite (70:02:07).
- 12.20 **Paul McCartney's Standing Stone: The Documentary**. Follows the creation of Mac's new symphonic work through its first performance at the Royal Albert Hall (S) (7398571).
- 1.00 **News: Weather, Local News** (S) (7398571), 1.10 Neighbours (S) (7317275).
- 1.30 **Disneytime**. Keith Chegwin and Jayna Middleton present the cartoon clips (S) (7491235).
- 2.10 **Home** (Steven Spielberg 1991 US). Hollywood's perennial man-child Steven Spielberg would seem to have been a natural for updating the JM Barrie classic, Peter Pan, but Robin Williams, as Peter, and Dustin Hoffman (as Captain Hook) give curiously flat performances. The screenplay gets lost in New Ageisms and the direction gets lost in the expensive - and, let's not be mean - impressive sets. It's all about corporate workaholic Williams getting back in touch with his inner child (47:57:57).
- 4.25 **The Pink Panther** (R) (3815881), 4.50 Final Score (S) (0346317), 5.10 News: Weather, Local News (57:33:17), 5.25 Neighbours (68:22:42).
- 5.50 **Big Break**. Snooker game show takes a paria theme with Jim Davidson as Peter Pan and guest star Wendy Richard as Tinkerbell. In their dreams... (S) (7444:04).
- 6.20 **Beethoven's 2nd** (Rod Daniel 1993 US). Or, this time there are puppies. Soberly enjoyable St Bernard sequel, with Charles Grodin competing with the shaggy mutt for audience sympathy (S) (147:44:42).
- 7.40 **EastEnders**. Tiffany pushes Grant too far. (S) (71:27:13).
- 8.10 **Blankety Blank**. Lily Savage takes over the moth-eaten game show. (S) (51:56:21).
- 8.40 **News: Weather** (R) (78:05:10).
- 9.00 **The Vicar of Dibley**. Christmas special for Dawn French's female vicar, with Alice and Hugo's relationship to the fore (S) (71:53:13).
- 9.40 **Before They Were Famous II**. See Today's Pick, above (S) (71:23:33).
- 10.15 **True Lies** (James Cameron 1994 US). Arnold Schwarzenegger is a secret agent so hush-hush that even his wife (Jamie Lee Curtis) doesn't know what he does in this casually racist and misogynist (check out the scene where Arnie interrogates his wife) James Bond pastiche. Big bangs, big yuck (36:53:17).
- 12.35 **Unplugged - Oasis**. Liam had a cold, so Noel went solo in this acoustic set of the boys' greatest hits (R) (S) (71:49:58).
- 1.20 **Carry On Girls** (Gerald Thomas 1973 UK). Businessman Sid James infuriates local feminists (led by an unlikely Joan Sims) by a staging a beauty contest. No Kenneth Williams or Charles Hawtrey in this one, alas (Followed by Weather) (78:27:53). To 2.45am.

BBC2

- 7.15 **The Phil Siggers Show** (R) (0968510).
- 7.40 **Gold Diggers of 1933** (Mervyn LeRoy 1933 US). Funny, good-natured backstage musical and Depression period piece, with Ginger Rogers singing 'We're in the Money', and Dick Powell, Ruby Keeler, Joan Blondell and 60 chorus girls (for one stage wired up with lights) choreographed by Busby Berkeley (78:14:58).
- 9.15 **Oliver Twist** (David Lean 1948 UK). With a terrifying Robert Newton as Bill Sikes, Alec Guinness as a controversial Fagin (his portrayal caused trouble with Jewish groups in America, and the film's release there was delayed several years) and Kay Walsh as Nancy - this often suffers unfairly in comparison with Lean's *Great Expectations*. Expressionistically designed and lit, and with a real sense of decay and evil (78:55:05).
- 11.05 **Thoroughly Modern Millie** (George Roy Hill 1967 US). Frenetic, over-busy musical spoof, set in the 1920s, with Julie Andrews as the fortune-hunting flapper. With Mary Tyler Moore, Beatrice Ullie and James Fox (47:15:03).
- 1.20 **Christmas in Vienna**. Placido Domingo and Sarah Brightman lead the festivities in the Austrian capital (S) (29:37:75).
- 2.20 **Everything to Play For**. Goes to Russia to uncover the origins of Shostakovich's Leningrad Symphony (S) (45:07:33).
- 2.50 **Safame**. Catherine Malfitano takes the title role in Luc Bondy's production of Richard Strauss's opera, recorded at the Royal Opera House (S) (75:31:15).
- 4.45 **Far Country** (Anthony Mann 1955 US). James Stewart takes his herd of cattle to Alaska in this handsome photograph of yarn - one of director Anthony Mann's series of acclaimed westerns which helped revitalise the genre in the 1950s (71:40:52:49).
- 6.20 **Land of the Tiger**. In the last of the series, Valmik Thapar travels to the rainforests of Assam, Southern India's Western Ghats, and across the seas to Sri Lanka (S) (71:30:45:01).
- 7.20 **A Christmas Dickens**. Simon Callow reads Mrs Lippin's Lodgings, which, apparently, was as popular in Dickens's time as *A Christmas Carol* (S) (71:30:45:01).
- 7.45 **The Royal Ballet**. A double bill of performances by the Royal Ballet, recorded in July shortly before the closure of the Royal Opera House. The company performs George Balanchine's *Symphony in C* and William Forsythe's *Steeple* (S) (71:30:45:01).
- 9.00 **Under the Sun: The Hunt**. See Today's Pick, above (S) (71:23:33).
- 10.10 **Stephens and Son Christmas Special**. Seasonal episode from 1974. Harold plans a Christmas in Mallorca (R). (71:30:45:01).
- 10.55 **Stella Street**. More from John Sessions, Phil Cornwell and Peter Richardson's enjoyably silly spoof in which movie stars like Jack Nicholson and Michael Caine live in suburban (S) (38:13:33).
- 11.05 **The Browning Version** (Mike Fingale 1994 UK). Albert Finney gives a performance of considerable pathos as Terence Rattigan's about-to-retire schoolmaster, re-evaluating his life as his wife (Greta Scacchi) - an unlikely spouse for a dusty teacher, it must be said - carries on with chemistry master Matthew Modine, and he is asked not to make a speech on Speech Day. Also with Julian Sands and Michael Gambon (S) (61:14:23).
- 12.35 **The Amazing Colossal Man** (Bert I Gordon 1957 US). An army officer exposed to atomic blast grows into a giant and attacks Las Vegas (Then Weather) (39:02:45). To 2.00am

ITV

- 6.00 **GMTV** (22:54:08), 9.25 **The Treasure Seekers** (R) (S) (71:57:58:1).
- 9.55 **Children's ITV**. Tiny Toon Adventures (S) (12:45:51), 10.20 **Percy the Park Keeper** (S) (75:59:58).
- 10.50 **Freaky Friday** (Melanie Mayron 1995 US). Shelley Long swaps bodies with her teenage daughter for the day - all courtesy of the sort of magic fairyman that this feeble remake could have done with (S) (71:59:04:34).
- 12.30 **Countdown to Tomorrow** (S) (43:05:57), 1.20 **News: Headlines: Weather** (S) (43:35:30).
- 1.30 **Batman: Mask of the Phantasm** (Eric Radomski 1993 US). Animated Batman from the Dark Knight series - the gloomy 1980s comic books credited with 'saving' the creaky crusader from the legacy of 1960s camp (S) (71:59:26:58).
- 2.40 **The Sword in the Stone** (Wolfgang Reitherman 1963 US). The White's magical Arthurian story (S) (71:18:24:9).
- 4.10 **The Canterville Ghost**. Ian Richardson leads in this lavish version of Oscar Wilde's comic ghost story about an American family who move into a haunted English castle (S) (71:57:41:02).
- 5.40 **News: Weather** (S) (43:35:30).
- 5.50 **Emmerdale** (S) (71:59:26:58).
- 6.20 **Forever Young** (Steve Miner 1992 US). A 1930s test pilot has his body cryogenically frozen by ahead-of-his-time boffin buddy George Wendt, and then wakes up in 1992. Jamie Lee Curtis is the modern gal who helps out. Fun, up to a point (S) (71:01:08:58).
- 8.20 **Coronation Street**. Kevin has a shock for Natalie (S) (53:17:17).
- 8.50 **News: Weather** (S) (22:14:12).
- 9.00 **Drama: Kisses**. It Batters. Ella Macpherson, Cliff Richard, David Seaman, Roll Harris, Melinda Messenger and Lord Archer look a ripe bunch of guest victims (S) (71:13:17).
- 10.00 **Dances with Wolves** (Kevin Costner 1990 US). Simplistic, hugely self-confident western epic, mocked for its Sioux subtleties and barely competent script and direction, but which cleaned up at the box office and at the Oscars. Costner is the disillusioned Civil War soldier who goes native American - the support boasts the likes of Lloyd Red Crow Westerner and Nathan Lee Chasing His Horse (S) (71:35:08:51).
- 1.20 **Box Office America** (11:32:03).
- 1.35 **Please Turn Over** (Gerald Thomas 1960 UK). A teenage girl writes an embarrassing roman à clef parody by relatives and neighbours in this gentle farce helmed by Carry On director Thomas. With Leslie Phillips, Joan Sims, Charles Hawtrey and Lionel Jeffries (87:00:53).
- 5.05 **Collins and Maconie's Movie Club** (R) (S) (34:55:02), 5.30 **Children's ITV**: Teletubbies (S) (60:35:53), 5.55 **News** (52:43:59). To 6.00am.

CHANNEL 4

- 6.30 **Orville** (R) (S) (43:05:57), 6.35 **Madeline** (R) (00:28:30), 7.00 **The Babysitters' Club** (R) (00:18:22), 7.25 **Two Stupid Dogs** (R) (S) (03:28:26), 8.00 **The Big Breakfast** (17:58), 10.00 **Zig and Zag's Big Morning: Happy Days** (R) (10:77), 10.30 **Zig and Zag's Big Morning: Morning Line** (S) (06:59:57).
- 11.15 **Jack the Giant Killer** (Nathan Juran 1961 US). Children's fantasy adventure, set in 'Ancient England', about a giant who is sent to kidnap a king's daughter. With Kerwin Mathews, Judi Meredith and Tom Thatchler - and, no I haven't heard of any of them either (71:23:51:30).
- 1.00 **Channel 4 Racing from Kempton Park and Leopardstown**. Including the 1.10, 1.45, 2.20 (otherwise known as the King George VI Chase) and 2.55 races (S) (45:71:40:4).
- 3.15 **The Land that Time Forgot** (Kevin Connor 1975 US). The special effects are a tad ropey, but otherwise this is an entertaining screen version of Edgar Rice Burroughs' 1918 sci-fi yarn about the survivors from a British ship sunk by a German submarine washing up on a South American island replete with dinosaurs and the like (71:42:21:25).
- 4.55 **Beasties** (R) (71:59:26:58).
- 5.25 **Light Lunch**. Cardigan Christmas. Vic Reeves, Bob Mortimer and Julie, Jonsson are Mel and Sue's late lunch guests (45:30:42).
- 6.30 **Brookside**. Nine-minute episode from the fact that his daughter is involved with Barry Grant (S) (71:59:26:58).
- 8.05 **Midsummer Night's Dream** (Adrian Noble 1996 UK). Filmed theatre, really, and not too smart with it, this is Adrian Noble's RSC production with Lindsay Duncan and Alex Jennings leading the cast (62:31:53:39).
- 10.00 **Neil** (Michael Apted 1994 US). Jodie Foster gets to show off her range in this variant on Francis Thurston's *Leviathan*. She plays a young woman who has grown up isolated in the North Carolina backwoods, away from civilisation and other people, and who speaks a mysterious language of her own. Liam Neeson and Natasha Richardson are the anthropologist and psychologist who both want a bit of her - and, this being Hollywood, fall in love at the same time (S) (71:08:33:17).
- 12.05 **Le Confessionnal** (Robert Lapage 1995 Can/UK/Fr). Scenes from Alfred Hitchcock's 1953 Quebec-set thriller *Confession* (see below) are interspersed with this offbeat mystery drama about a man who returns to the city for his father's funeral. When he learns that his brother has not appeared for the ceremony, he sets out to find him. With Lorraine Bracco (60:26:23).
- 2.00 **Confession** (Alfred Hitchcock 1953 US). Which has most ponderous and ponderous pondered by an almost static performance from Montgomery Clift as the Quebec priest who must either break his confessional vows or be charged with a murder he did not commit. Anne Baxter moos his brow, and Karl Malden is the investigating cop (71:17:17).
- 3.45 **Strange Cargo** (Frank Borzage 1940 US). Strange is the word, but it's a shame it's scheduled so late because this is the sort of ludicrous melodrama that Christmas was made for. Clark Gable, freshly escaped from Devil's Island penal colony, is helped by a furiously smiling Joan Crawford, and hindered by criminals Peter Lorre and Paul Lukas. And, in the middle of all this, up pops Ian Hunter as the Messiah. Oh, yes (70:54:04). To 5.45am.

CHANNEL 5

- 6.00 **Dappledown Farm** (R) (77:77:75), 6.30 **The Wind in the Willows** (03:07:52), 6.55 **Mr Men and Little Miss** (S) (02:77:13), 7.00 **Winnie the Pooh** (46:57:33), 7.30 **Alvin and the Chipmunks** (96:09:03), 8.00 **Havakazoo** (R) (S) (04:53:77), 8.30 **Adventures of the Bush Patrol** (R) (S) (06:03:28).
- 8.00 **The Princess and the Goblin** (Josel Games 1992 UK/Fr). Animated tale based on a story by George MacDonald. When a young princess is forced to marry an ugly goblin, she finds help in the unlikely shape of an old woman and a miner's son. With the voices of Joss Ackland, Rick Mayall, Willie Sugden, Claire Bloom and Peggy Mount (81:59:22).
- 10.30 **Stickin' Around** (90:08:32), 11.00 **Eco Warriors Special** (S) (42:59:52), 11.30 **Wishbone** (R) (42:59:51), 12.00 **The Bold and the Beautiful** (71:59:26:58), 12.30 **Family Affairs** (S) (71:59:26:58), 1.00 **5 News Update** (S) (88:54:51).
- 1.05 **Football Special**. Channel 5, like others before them, has discovered that football is a great way into the ratings game, although its coverage, spear-headed by the tritely excitable Jonathan Pearce, has some way to go yet. Anyhow, Pearce and Steve Scott present these 'highlights' (actually they take nearly five hours; it wasn't that good). From the scope of this season's most extraordinary game - Troso, where Chelsea played in a snowstorm - there are stories and action from the World Cup exploits of England (you might remember CS had the England v Poland rights), Scotland, Ireland, and the European (mis)adventures of Arsenal, Newcastle, Chelsea and Aston Villa (67:09:52).
- 6.00 **100 Per Cent**. The gameshow without a host. Three contestants, playing in isolation, face 100 general-knowledge questions. (S) (44:59:57).
- 6.30 **Family Affairs**. All hell breaks loose as Annie and Elsa face the terrible truth about Jack and Maria's affair, especially when they realise that they are the last to know. Tim and Holly share a passionate kiss (S) (71:59:26:58).
- 7.10 **Gone with the Wind** (Victor Fleming 1939 US). See Today's Pick, above (71:59:26:58).
- 11.10 **Lexx - the Dark Zone Stories**. Last of this amblygry German-Canadian sci-fi series. Kai will die without some proto-blood (06:30:07).
- 1.00 **The Happy Hooker** (Nicholas Sgarbi 1975 US). Totaly sanitised screen version of New York brothel-keeper Xaviera Hollander's memoirs. Lyn Redgrave looks out adrift amid a no-name cast in the lead role. (57:59:52).
- 2.50 **Snake Signal** (Jerry Hopper 1955 US). Frontier drama set in New Mexico Territory in 1852 (but filmed in the Grand Canyon - and handsomely, too), in which a small replacement cavalry detachment rode into their new post, to find it under attack by Ute Indians. Only nine of the original complement survive and, realising that the Indians will attack again, are forced to escape downriver on flatboats. Dana Andrews leads the way (62:37:59).
- 4.20 **The Plough and the Stars** (John Ford 1937 US). Ford's disappointingly stagey adaptation of Sean O'Casey's play about the 1916 Easter Rising in Dublin. Patsy Kensit is the revolutionary and Barbara Stanwyck the wife who'd rather he didn't go and mix it up with the British Army (26:07:33).
- 5.30 **Per Cent** (S) (77:40:08). To 6.00am.

RADIO

- Radio 1** (97.8-106.2MHz FM)
6.00 **Best Music Radio Show**. 12.00 **Take Three**. 1.00 **Radio 1 Breakfast**. 2.00 **Clive James**. 6.00 **EastEnders**. 9.00 **Judge Jules**. 11.00 **Westwood**. 2.00 **One in the Sun**. 5.00 **Charlie Jordan**.
- Radio 2** (89.5-107.9MHz FM)
6.00 **After Lunch**. 7.30 **Wake Up to Wogan**. 9.30 **Non Stop**. 12.00 **Alan Freeman**. 2.00 **Christmas**. 4.00 **John Peel**. 5.00 **Clive James**. 6.00 **EastEnders**. 9.00 **Judge Jules**. 11.00 **Westwood**. 2.00 **One in the Sun**. 5.00 **Charlie Jordan**.
- Radio 3** (92.4-101.6MHz FM)
6.00 **On Air**. 7.00 **Classical Collection**. 10.00 **Musical Encounters**. 12.00 **Composers of the Week**. 1.00 **Light Music**. 2.00 **The Radio 3 Lunchtime Concert**. 3.00 **The BBC Archive**. 4.00 **Musical Encounters**. 4.45 **Turn of the Century**. 5.00 **Music Festival**. 5.45 **Turn of the Century**. 6.00 **Religious Programmes**. 6.30 **In Country Churches**. 7.00 **Performance on 3**. 8.45 **Heath and Bank**. 9.45 **Protestant**. 10.00 **Hier and Now**. 11.30 **Composer of the Week**. 12.00 **News**. 12.30 **Composer of the Week**. 1.00 **Composer of the Week**. 1.30 **Composer of the Week**. 2.00 **Composer of the Week**. 2.30 **Composer of the Week**. 3.00 **Composer of the Week**. 3.30 **Composer of the Week**. 4.00 **Composer of the Week**. 4.30 **Composer of the Week**. 5.00 **Composer of the Week**. 5.30 **Composer of the Week**. 6.00 **Composer of the Week**. 6.30 **Composer of the Week**. 7.00 **Composer of the Week**. 7.30 **Composer of the Week**. 8.00 **Composer 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